International Students' Participation in Intercultural Classrooms at a UK University

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Abstract

Recent research has reported a common tendency for international students to be silent or verbally inactive in classroom activities, identifying language competence and cultural differences as the main barriers to their participation. However, insights into international students' actual experiences and feelings within different classroom contexts remain rather limited. This study explores these issues through an ethnographically-informed case study of 10 postgraduate international students in conjunction with perspectives from 12 of their instructors and 12 peers in different classroom communities at a UK university.

Grounded in Lave and Wenger's concept of 'community of practice', this research perceives international students' participation as a socially situated and interactive process and thus investigates the contextual influences to re-examine the concept of 'classroom participation' in university classrooms. The research findings suggest different categories of influencing factors and various classroom participation patterns and they reveal tensions in some classroom communities resulting from different perceptions and attitudes towards classroom participation. Acknowledging the complexity of culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms, this study suggests the importance of contextual impacts and 'sense of community' in the negotiating process of classroom participation. Comparative analyses of interactions in different classroom communities provided conceptual and practical implications for all the members involved to co-construct democratic and dialogic classroom communities.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

> "I feel stupid sometimes. I feel like why people are asking questions and say what in their mind and why I am just sitting here and say nothing" (International student from Indonesia, Farah, Interview 1)[1].

> "There was no dialogue. There was no participation in the seminars. It made me feel very unhappy and I had to change because I didn't feel I was getting much out of the classes because everybody was quiet" (UK peer, Tracy).

> "I think oral participation is important. I don't think it's the only way, but I think it's certainly important. It's not always about discussion. It might be about illustrations; it might be about drawing diagrams; it might be about, you know, other ways of actually showing somebody that you have engaged with big ideas other than always having to be verbal" (Instructor, Martina).

1.1 Research Topic and Rationale

The internationalisation of higher education and the growth of international student mobility have made higher education classrooms culturally and linguistically more diverse than ever, especially among postgraduate students (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Gu, Schweisfurth, & Day, 2009; Yu & Moskal, 2019). In this global context, as presented in the participants' quotes above, second language (L2) international students[2] experience challenges to negotiate their classroom participation, so do their peers and instructors to react to their participation modes. International students' classroom participation has attracted increasing attention across different disciplines, such as applied linguistics, education and sociology. Scholars in these disciplines explore the topic from different but interconnected perspectives. Applied linguists, who regard

[1] The data of interviews and reports from non-Chinese international students were originally in English. The excerpts of their quotes contained some mistakes, but in order to capture the tone, I have left language as spoken and written, including errors.

[2] In this study, I use 'L2 international students' to refer to students whose first language is not English and are domiciled outside the UK, including EU students.

classroom participation as a process of "second language socialisation", offer investigation of the role of old-timers in facilitating newcomers' socialisation into the new learning environment and emphasis on the importance of identity negotiation to classroom participation (Duff, 2010; Morita, 2004). In the field of education, researchers often discuss classroom interaction rituals and conventions (Choi, 2015; Ha & Li, 2014), while sociologists look at students' classroom participation as a social act which is closely related to sociocultural environment (Hao, 2010; Zhou, Knoke, & Sakamoto, 2005). However, there is no clear delineation among the different disciplines because classroom participation is not only related to linguistic competence, but is also an educational issue, significantly influenced by sociocultural elements.

Given the growing internationalisation and diversity in UK higher education institutions, it is of great importance to investigate how newcomers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds negotiate their classroom experience and their socialisation into new academic communities (Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015). The necessity of participating in intercultural classrooms exposes international students to various challenges, such as language issue, intercultural clashes, and unclear ascribed roles. However, outsiders are rarely able to understand the struggle that some silent international students have experienced, as it is usually an invisible process and they are reluctant to express their concerns (Harumi, 2010; Zhang, 2004). By providing a close examination of the classroom experiences of some L2 international students, this study aims to expose the intricate nature of challenges that international students might face. In particular, it presents the contextual influences of different academic communities on these students' classroom participation.

On a personal level, this study was inspired by my postgraduate study experience in Australia. During the academic year 2013-14, I joined a one-year TESOL exchange study programme in Western Australia. Fewer than 20 students were in

the programme and I was the only Asian face in most of the classes. It was my first experience of studying abroad, and I felt overwhelmed, especially by the active classroom interaction patterns. I felt incapable of joining in the discussions. For the first month, I was completely silent in class, although I had a strong desire to join in the discussions. I attributed my reticence to the language barrier, as most of my peers were native speakers who spoke very fast in accents that I was unfamiliar with. As time went by, I began to speak up in some classes while remaining completely silent in others. I was aware that I performed and felt differently in different classes, but I could not clearly articulate these differences. My experiences and questions motivated me to explore the topic of classroom participation in my thesis.

1.2 Research Background

A review of the titles of existing research studies relating to L2 students' classroom participation reveals that it is often examined from the perspective of international students' silence, reticence, inactive oral participation, and adaptation to the new learning environment (e.g. Chanock, 2010; Cheng, 2000; Hsieh, 2007; Simonis, 2016; Valdez, 2015). These foci indicate the prevalent assumption of equating classroom participation to verbal participation, and that silence is problematic. The existing literature usually links international students' reticence to cultural differences and English communicative competences (Ha and Li 2014), with silence often attributed to the individual characteristics of the students, the idea being that some people are just quiet. However, why might the same individual student behave differently in different classes? Little research has been conducted on how language-based inhibition may be compounded by other contextual elements, such as 'reciprocal cultural familiarity' and power differentials between different languages, cultures and knowledge (Zhou et al., 2005, p. 288). In Moskal and Schweisfurth's study (2018), international postgraduates talk not only about the difficulties of engaging across different

language and cultural backgrounds, but also about hidden prejudices related to perceptions of otherness on both sides. This study re-examines the concept of classroom participation to explore international students' live classroom experiences in specific contexts.

Researchers' conceptualisations of classroom participation determine the orientations of their studies. Morita (2004, p. 575) identifies two major research orientations within the field of applied linguistics- the "product-oriented approach" and the "process-oriented approach" and this categorisation also applies to other disciplines. The product-oriented approach investigates specific knowledge and skills that L2 international students need to acquire to participate competently in the classroom. This group of researchers often perceives classroom participation as verbal engagement in classroom activities; their research often focuses on skills and knowledge that L2 students should master to achieve more active oral participation in class. The prevalent skills and knowledge include language competence, knowledge of the subject, understanding of cultural differences, and educational rituals and conventions. By contrast, the process-oriented method focuses on exploring students' actual classroom experiences and presenting their development and transformation over time. Scholars in this category are often interested in participants' feelings, thoughts and perspectives as they participate in oral classroom activities. More recent research tends to apply the second approach to present the situated and complex process of negotiating language, culture and identities rather than treating classroom participation as a matter of merely acquiring pre-set skills and knowledge. In this study, I follow the process-oriented approach, focusing on L2 international students' negotiating process of classroom participation.

Grounded in the conceptual framework of "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), this research explores L2 international students' classroom participation patterns in specific contexts, namely classroom settings

at a UK university. I differentiate my interpretation from the essentialist view of culture and predetermined discussion of linguistic and background influences. Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 53) argue that learners develop "an evolving form of membership" as they "change in how they participate in a community through the multiple social relations and roles they experience". Thus, this study perceives classroom participation as a "dynamic, socially situated process" (Duff 2010, 169) and classrooms as communities. A context oriented analysis of students' cross-cultural experiences has been advocated (Cheng, 2000; Kubota & Lehner, 2004) and this study closely examines the contextual influences.

1.3 Research Aim and Questions

The general aim of this research is to gain a better understanding of L2 international students' participation in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms in a UK university and thus inform educational and pedagogical practices. As discussed above, this study examines classroom participation as a complex, situated and interactive process, which is influenced not only by linguistic and cultural factors but also by negotiation of identities, relationship with instructor and peers, as well as pedagogical practices. This study is directed by the following research questions:

1. How do individual L2 international students negotiate their classroom participation patterns in different learning environments?
2. How do international students' instructors and peers affect their classroom participation?
3. How is silence perceived, used, and co-constructed in intercultural classrooms?

1.4 Research Design and Methodology

In order to respond to the research questions, I undertake a qualitative, ethnographically-informed approach to investigate L2 international students'

participation and negotiation process in close relation to contextual interaction from multiple perspectives, including ten focal international students as well as their peers and instructors. Immersed periodically in the research context for an extended period of one academic year, I was able to gain insights on the examined classroom culture and students' actions from a closer perspective. Applying the triangulation technique in qualitative research, I used multiple data collection methods to capture different dimensions of classroom participation, including classroom observation, semi-structured and unstructured interviews and reflective journals. By tracing students into different classrooms, observing them, and interviewing them about their reactions and responses to the class practices, I documented their changing perspectives at different stages. The focal students' perspectives were the main focus, while different views from their instructors and peers as well as field notes from classroom observations were also collected to explore how the students were positioned and conceptualised by other community members.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in that it provides a better understanding of international students' classroom participation in higher education classrooms and thus has practical implications for everyone involved in the process, including institutions, educators, L2 international students, and their peers. This research also makes an important contribution to the existing literature by examining the negotiation of classroom participation from different perspectives. First, although this issue has received numerous researchers' attention, few studies have investigated peers' and instructors' perceptions of international students' classroom participation in higher education. By taking account of relatively silent students' voices, peers' comments, and instructors' review, this research will achieve a comprehensive understanding of the focal students' classroom interaction challenges. Second, most studies in this area have been carried out in ESL or EFL language learning

classrooms, while mainstream university classes have seldom been the focus of research. This study explores four different subjects from three different departments to investigate potential subject-specific differences and provide a valuable cross-section of perspectives. Third, current research tends to neglect the multi-directional nature of classroom interaction. Many researchers investigate international students' experience from the perspective of adjustment and adaptation (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Wu & Hammond, 2011); it seems they assume that it is solely the responsibility of international students to learn the host culture and fit in. This study takes into account the dynamic nature of classroom participation, which needs to be understood as a bidirectional negotiation instead of unidirectional enculturation (Rocca, 2010). It is necessary, therefore, to examine how academic communities need to be transformed because of the diversity of backgrounds, teaching and learning needs. This research examines the reciprocal influences and provides suggestions to all academic community members to achieve a more effective learning environment.

1.6 Outline of the Thesis

The remainder of the thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter Two contextualises the research and discusses the current trend of internationalisation in higher education. The development of internationalisation at home and abroad are distinguished and compared. The internationalisation of curriculum is then discussed to understand the aims and teaching objectives of higher education. The chapter ends by examining the growth of student mobility and international students in the UK, presenting an idea of the current international student cohort in Anglophone universities and specifically in the UK.

Chapter Three and Chapter Four examine the previous literature through "theoretical reviews", "integrative summaries", and "methodology reviews" (Creswell, 2003, p. 33). Chapter Three presents the theoretical context of this study through a critical account and review of the current literature on

intercultural communication, pedagogy and community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), which has guided the data collection and was also challenged and refined as the research went on. Chapter Four surveys the key themes of the existing literature on international students' classroom participation. It explores their substantive findings on the topic and critically reviews methodological and theoretical stances to identify gaps in knowledge and practice.

Chapter Five presents the methodology of the study. This chapter provides the rationale for ethnographically-informed qualitative case study approach and discusses the data collection methods: classroom observation, interviews, and students' reflective journals. This chapter also explains the data analysis procedures and discusses ethical issues of trustworthiness and credibility in relation to this research. Finally, some reflections on the roles of the researcher in this study are provided.

The findings of the study are presented over the next three chapters. Chapter Six outlines the cross-case findings, exploring patterns within the classroom experiences and responses of the focal international students and their peers and instructors. Different conceptualisations of classroom participation, categories of participation modes, and common influencing factors are described to present a full picture of the study. In Chapter Seven and Eight, five of the case studies are presented to exemplify the patterns detailed in Chapter Six and show the uniqueness of individual cases.

Finally, the discussion and conclusion chapter synthesises and conceptualises the findings of the study, providing theoretical and pedagogical implications. Some tentative suggestions are offered to international students, their peers and instructors, as well as to institutions to create an interactive and effective learning environment.

Chapter 2 Research Context: The Internationalisation of Higher Education

2.1 Overview

This chapter discusses the global trend of the internationalisation of higher education within the contemporary context of globalisation. It distinguishes two different orientations: internationalisation at home and abroad. The increase in student mobility in Anglophone universities and specifically the international student population in the UK are described. Highlighting the large number of international students in postgraduate programmes in the UK, the chapter points out potential issues related to the cultural and linguistic diversity of the contemporary classroom. The development of the internationalisation of curriculum is also presented to show the expectations and instructional goals in the educational process.

2.2 Globalisation and Higher Education

The contemporary context of globalisation has seen a dramatic increase in the global flows of people, knowledge, information, technologies, investments and policies (Marginson & Van Der Wende, 2007; Moskal & Schweisfurth, 2018). As mediums for these global flows, higher education institutions simultaneously play a crucial part in developing and supporting the formation of the global environment and are also changed throughout the process. Being both the agents and the objects of globalisation (Guo & Chase, 2011), higher education institutions worldwide have seen significant changes in the structures, policies and student cohort (Janette Ryan, 2011). In addition, globalisation generates markets and competition among different countries and different institutions because of various drivers, such as economic benefits, political policies and attraction of talented individuals (Habu, 2000). The ability to attract international students has become an assessment criterion for the performance and quality of institutions (Song & McCarthy, 2018).

Higher education has been swept up in global corporatisation and marketisation, which has made it 'an export commodity' worldwide (Janette Ryan, 2011). For host universities and countries, economic benefits constitute the most direct drive. International students' high tuition fees as well as their living expenses have become significant sources of income for the host institutions and their local economies (OECD, 2018). At the postgraduate level, in the UK, tuition fees for international students in taught programmes in 2017-18 academic year ranged from £10,000 to £38,000 depending on the subject, and the average annual cost of studying is estimated to be at least £22,200 (Playdon, 2018). Currently, the UK hosts approximately 460,000 international students in higher education, generating around £20 billion annually. On March 16th, 2019, the UK government published a new International Educational Strategy with the ambition of boosting the number of international students studying in the UK by more than 30%, which will help increase the income generated by education export to £35 billion (GOV.UK, 2019). McCarthy, Song, and Jayasuriya (2017) point out that universities have been transformed into corporations competing in the global market, as institutions and countries come up with various policies to promote and attract international students.

The global corporatisation and marketisation of higher education have often been attributed to the impact of neo-liberalism, in terms of neo-liberal agendas and policies (Cannella & Koro-Ljungberg, 2017; Mahony & Weiner, 2019). From the economic and the ideological perspectives, Harvey (2005, p. 2) defines neo-liberalism as

> "Political economic practice that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade".

Neo-liberalism in higher education operates in various, sometimes invisible, ways (Cannella & Koro-Ljungberg, 2017). The conceptualisation of students as

consumers of educational products and faculty as service providers has dominated global practices and becomes an essential part of the neoliberal discourse about higher education (Ingleby, 2015). However, researchers are critical about the impact of neoliberal agendas on teaching and learning practices in higher education. For example, Cannella and Koro-Ljungberg (2017, p. 159) criticise higher education institutions for their "excessive focus on money generation" practices, ranging from generation of research funds to decisions for hiring and student recruitment. Instead, they argue that higher education should pay more attention to "appreciation for knowledge, diverse ways of being, and human betterment". Mahony and Weiner (2019, p. 569) make a cautionary note about the consequences of the advancement of neo-liberalism in higher education: loss of academic control of the university, loss of public accountability, and loss of inclusive and collaborative environments for work and study.

However, globalisation also brings benefits, development and opportunities for internationalisation of higher education. First, it motivates the development of cosmopolitan competence, regarding the acquisition of global knowledge and skills (Moskal & Schweisfurth, 2018). This has been listed by institutions as a goal and essential attribute of graduates. Second, globalisation increases employability through educational mobility. In increasingly globalised markets, international experience can improve students' knowledge of the market, culture and language skills and thus their employability. Third, it promotes brain circulation (OECD, 2018). The growth of international student mobility has significant impact on national and international talent pools. Attracting international students supports the development of innovation and production systems, especially if they stay permanently after graduation to work in the host country.

Globalisation and internationalisation in higher education are mutually generative and interactive (Marginson & Van Der Wende, 2007). In response to the globalisation of cultures, economies and labour markets, higher education

institutions develop new policies and curricula to meet the needs of global development and challenges. Meanwhile, the internationalisation of higher education stimulates the development of globalisation. The next section discusses the trend of internationalisation of higher education by distinguishing two trends, namely, internationalisation at home and abroad.

2.3 Internationalisation at Home and Abroad

It is a global trend that universities are committed to internationalising their establishments (Dippold, 2015). The widely acknowledged definition of internalisation of higher education by Knight (2004, p. 11) refers to "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education." It is an ongoing process involving the multi-dimensional integration of curriculum and cultural interaction. There are two directions of internationalisation in the tertiary education: internationalisation abroad and internationalisation at home. Internationalisation abroad describes various forms of education across borders, establishing campuses overseas, international partnership for teaching and research, and exchange programmes for students and staff among transnational universities (Knight, 2006). By contrast, internationalisation at home comprises activities that encourage students' international understanding and intercultural skills. Turner and Robson (2008, p. 15) refer to internationalisation at home as "the embedding of international intercultural perspectives into local educational settings". This study focuses on the trend of internationalisation at home as its broad research context to explore L2 international students' participation within culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. Throughout the rest of the thesis, 'internationalisation of higher education' refers to internationalisation at home.

However, internationalising their establishments, both at home and abroad, is just the 'symbolic' process of internationalisation of higher education and there are 'transformative' influences on the culture and values of higher education

institutions and academic communities (Turner & Robson, 2008). Turner and Robson offer the concepts of "symbolic" and "transformative" to distinguish the different forms and orientations of the trend of internationalisation. The transformative orientation of internationalisation is "internally-driven, partnership-focused and co-operative in process", providing sustainable benefits for both the institutions and the international students (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2011, p. 611). In the long term, international students can diversify and enhance the talent pools and thus contribute to "knowledge creation, innovation and economic performance" (OECD, 2018, p. 218). Song and McCarthy (2018) highlight the benefits of cultural and knowledge diversity that the internationalisation of student and staff communities bring to the institutions.

The internationalisation of higher education generates great opportunities for development but researchers studying this trend warn of potential educational issues and unanticipated consequences (Dassin, Enders, & Kottmann, 2014; Knight, 2013; Webb, 2007). Brandenburg and De Wit call for critical reflection on the concept of internationalisation as they observe the fast development of internationalisation as "moving from simple exchange of students to the big business of recruitment and from activities impacting on an incredibly small elite group to a mass phenomenon" (2011, p. 15). Dassin et al. (2014, p. 74) point out that international student mobility characterises many internationalisation policies and they show concerns over "maintaining academic quality in the face of unregulated expansion and privatisation". There is still a long way to go for international higher education to become an open and global system. Beelen and Jones (2015) argue that the mere presence of international students alone does not constitute internationalisation at home. Instead, they claim that internationalisation at home requires the internationalisation of curriculum and learning outcomes. One common challenge that confronts higher education institutions is providing international students with the "pedagogically responsive and culturally appropriate curricula" (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2011, p. 614). The next

section discusses the concept of internationalisation of the curriculum.

2.4 Internationalisation of the Curriculum

Internationalising the curriculum, as a response to globalisation, plays a fundamental role in the development of the internationalisation of higher education as it guides pedagogy, learning outcomes and assessment (Beelen & Jones, 2015). Leask (2009, p. 209) provides a widely-recognised definition of the 'the internationalisation of the curriculum' as "the incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the content of the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning process and support services of a programme of study". Leask (2015) updates the definition further and makes specific reference to the internationalised dimension of learning outcomes and assessments. Particularly, she highlights the context of the diverse "cultures and practices of knowing, doing, and being" and claims that an internationalised curriculum should encourage cultural and linguistic diversity and develop students' awareness of themselves as global citizens. As it affects the teaching and learning process, curriculum informs the practice of classroom participation, which is the focus of this thesis. The discussion of the development of the internationalisation of curriculum in this section provides the context for the study of classroom participation.

Shiel and Takeda (2008) suggest that the concept of the internationalisation of curriculum is neither fully understood nor well developed in practice. There is prevalent ambiguity and uncertainty about the terminology, rationales and goals (Dunne, 2011). Through my review of the literature, I have identified several issues regarding the internationalisation of curriculum, namely, the perceived

superiority of the Western[3] educational tradition, the alienation of international students as the "Other", insufficient attention to domestic students, and the deficient development of an informal curriculum. There is a prevailing dominance of Western theories and traditions in the existing curricula. Ryan (2012) reflects that international students are not a 'minority group' anymore and the nature of the curriculum and pedagogy needs to be extended "in the wake of an unprecedented global movement of people and ideas" (p.1). In a study of the curriculum for a preparatory programme for international students in Australia, Doherty and Singh (2005) criticise the perceived superiority of Western pedagogy, presenting the curriculum as an account of "how the West is done" pedagogically, which may result in the positioning of international students as "Others". Ermenc (2005) warns that ethnocentric curricula that privileges the culture and curriculum of one particular ethnic group while disregarding others may lead to social marginalisation of minority groups and he thus calls for development of an intercultural curriculum. Rizvi (2000) echoes Ermenc's view and argues, "curriculum content should not arise out of a singular cultural base but should engage critically with the global plurality of the sources of knowledge" (p.7).

Internationalising university curricula should not only accommodate international students, but also improve home students' experience. Clifford (2011) criticises the limited attention paid to internationalising all students, arguing that internationalisation at home needs to benefit all students, not only the students who have a mobility experience. Beelen and Jones (2015) share a similar opinion, arguing that the internationalisation of the curriculum should apply to both domestic and international students to develop their international and intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes. Jones (2013) maintains that the

[3] The use of the term 'Western' in this thesis is not intended to imply two geographical or intrinsically different categories of 'Western' and 'non-Western' cultures and classrooms. However, patterns of student mobility from the Global South and from Asia to Anglophone countries make these categories useful if crude.

domestic intercultural context can be a vehicle for transformational learning, which could be achieved through international mobility.

In addition, Beelen and Jones argue that internationalised curricula should encompass both formal and informal curricula. Leask (2015, p.8) defines the formal curriculum as "the syllabus as well as the orderly, planned schedule of experiences and activities that students must undertake as part of their degree program" and the informal curriculum as "support services and activities arranged by the university, which will not be assessed but support learning within the formal curriculum". Complementarily to the formal curriculum, the informal curriculum should go beyond the campus and take in intercultural and international learning opportunities in the local community, which could foster integration between domestic and international students and diversify the domestic learning environment (Beelen, 2014).

The internationalisation of the curriculum requires not only a good understanding of its connotation but also academic staff's capability and skills in applying pedagogy to implement it. Beelen and Jones (2015) report that even the instructors who have academic and professional experience overseas need support in comprehending and implementing internationalisation practice in intercultural contexts. Staff training and development is crucial to facilitating its implementation (Jude Carroll, 2014; Leask, 2015). The internationalisation of the curriculum is a complicated process and a collective endeavour that requires cooperation among institutions, educators, and domestic and international students.

2.5 International Student Mobility

The internationalisation of higher education promotes student mobility and attracts a large number of international students to cross borders. Studying abroad has both educational and professional benefits for international students and it

has become a key differentiating experience for those enrolled in higher education (OECD, 2018). Studying overseas is an opportunity to access different systems of education, providing the chance to see one's subject from distinctive perspectives that students may not have been exposed to in their home country. In addition, students are also motivated to study abroad for the sake of intercultural experiences and personal development. Living in a foreign country with a different culture, language and systems can enrich students' life experience, raise their intercultural awareness and enhance their independence (Gu et al., 2009).

The internationalisation of higher education has seen a dramatic increase in the number of international students in tertiary education institutions worldwide. OECD's annual Education at a Glance (2018) describes the development of international student mobility over the last two decades until 2016 for the latest. The global number of international students studying abroad in higher education programmes rose significantly from 2 million in 1999 to 5 million in 2016, with an outstanding increase of 19% from 2013 to 2016 as presented below in Figure 2-1.

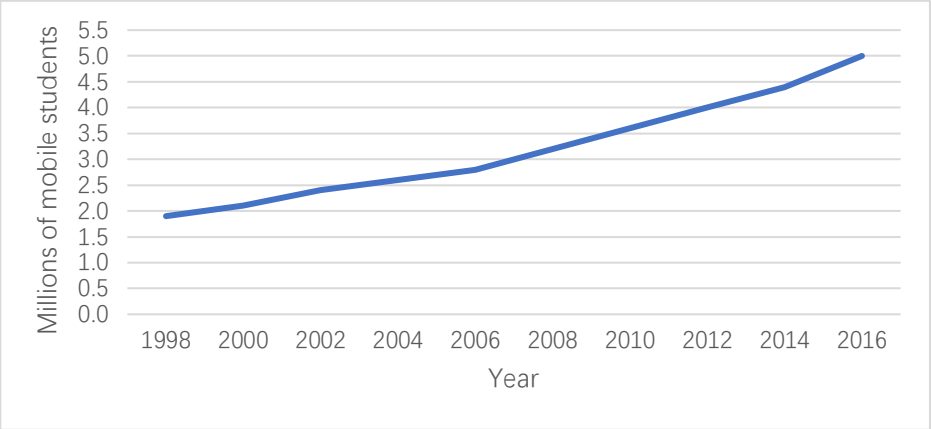

Figure 2-1 Growth in international student mobility (OECD, 2018)

International student flows remain very concentrated worldwide and the mobility pathways are in similar patterns, depending on various influencing factors for mobility, such as, language, geographical distance and political framework

conditions. Given the status of English as the global language, Anglophone countries[4] like the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Canada are the top destination countries for mobile tertiary students, accounting for over half of student mobility (UNESCO Institute for Statistic, 2018). Among the 3.5 million global mobile students within the OECD area, the US accounts for 971,000 students, the UK for 432,000, Australia for 336,000 and Canada for 189,000. Among different levels of tertiary education, international enrolment at the master's level has seen the most significant increase. The most striking growth in inflows of master's students has occurred in the United Kingdom and Australia. As for the origins of mobile students, Asian students form the largest group of international students, with up to 1.9 million in higher education, representing 66% of the number of international students for short-term programmes and 57% at master's level. Students from Europe are more mobile when it comes to long-term programmes at the bachelor's (25%) and doctoral level (32%). By contrast, Africa and the Americas send far fewer international students abroad at all levels. OECD (2018) estimates that student mobility is and will keep continue growing.

2.6 International Students in the United Kingdom

This section describes the characteristics of international student population in the UK. Well known for its quality in higher education and as an English-speaking country, the UK stands out in the competitive education market. OECD (2018) reports that the UK is the second largest recipient of international students after the United States, accounting for 432,000 out of 3.5 million international students in the OECD area. In the academic year 2016-17, the total number of international students pursuing their studies in the UK was 442,375 (UKCISA, 2019). Across all levels of studies, 81% of students studying in higher education in the UK are from

[4] Anglophone countries, based on Kachru's (1992) concept of the "inner circle", refer to the countries where English is used as native language or mother tongue.

within the UK, while 6% are from the rest of the EU and 13% are other countries worldwide. This set of data shows that the majority of students are from within the UK. However, the proportions of students vary greatly by different levels of study, as is shown in Figure 2-2, which presents student enrolments by level of study, mode of study and domicile in the academic year 2017-18.

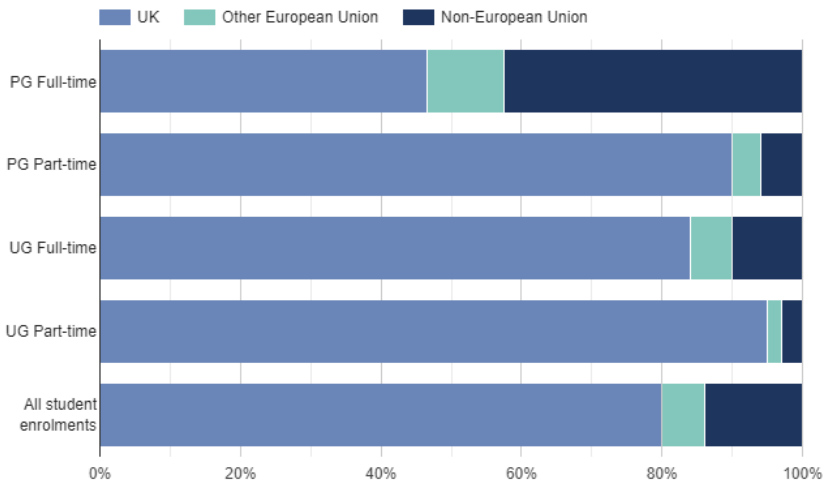

Figure 2-2 HE student enrolment by level of study, mode of study and domicile (HESA, 2019a)

As Figure 2-2 illustrates, full-time postgraduate courses have the highest proportion of non-UK domicile students, accounting for more than half of the student population. By contrast, full-time undergraduate programmes have a smaller share of international students, accounting for approximately 20% of the student population. Compared with full-time courses, part-time ones have much smaller number of non-UK international students; due to visa limitations, international students cannot apply for student visas to pursue part-time programmes. Only those who are eligible for other types of visa can study part-time, for example, those with dependent visas. Among the non-UK countries, China, India, the US, Hong Kong, and Malaysia are the top five countries of origin of international students in the UK, comprising 38% of the total international enrolment in the academic year 2017-18 (HESA, 2019b). China is the largest

international student provider, with 106,530 Chinese students – one-third of all non-EU students – being enrolled at UK universities. In addition, the share of international students differs greatly in terms of subjects studied, as data from HESA (2019a) presents below.

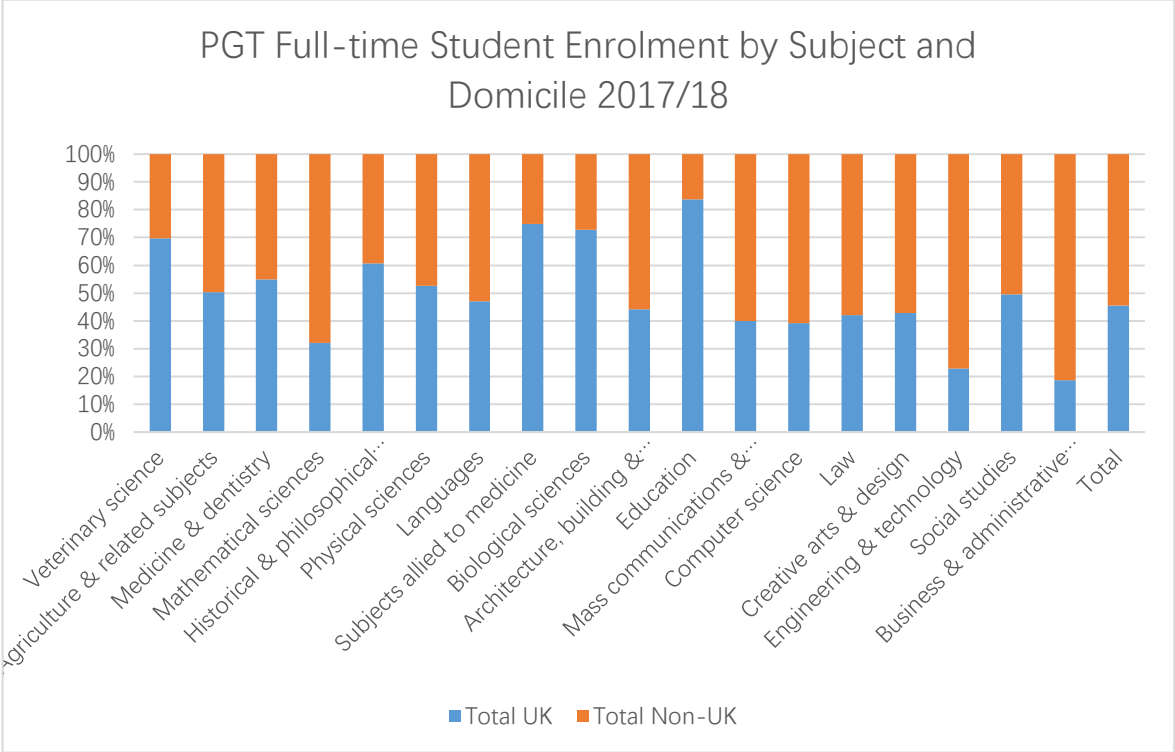

Figure 2-3 PGT full-time student enrolment by subject and domicile 2017/18[5]

At the level of postgraduate taught full-time studies, business and administrative studies attracted the biggest share of non-UK international students, accounting for more than 80% of total students. Engineering and technology had the second largest share of international students, making up around 77%. Mathematical sciences came third, with 68% of students from outside the UK. Besides business, this study explores two other subjects, communication and education, which have

[5] The chart is based on data from the table of HE student enrolment by subject of study and domicile from the website of Higher Education Statistics Agency

60% and 16% shares of international students respectively. The large share of international students in these three departments determines the culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms of the research context.

2.7 Summary

The trend of internationalisation has been reflected in the significant increase of the number of international students in Anglophone universities. Particularly in the UK higher education, international students have come to form the majority of the postgraduate student population, which not only brings great opportunities for internationalisation at home, but also causes challenges relating to meeting different learning needs among diverse student groups. Researchers and educators widely recognise a need for an internationalised curriculum to accommodate all students' needs and development. By discussing the sociocultural context of internationalisation of higher education, the development of curriculum, and the current situation of student mobility, this chapter has provided background and context for the focus of this study: classroom participation. The next chapter discusses the theoretical context of this study and builds the theoretical framework.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Context

3.1 Overview

This chapter presents the theoretical context of this study through a critical account and review of the current literature on intercultural communication, pedagogy and community of practice, laying a theoretical foundation to understand international students' classroom participation. Conceptualisations of classroom participation and participation issues are examined from the perspectives of cultural traditions and pedagogical norms. Acknowledging the significant influence of cultural backgrounds and pedagogical ideologies on student participation, this study differentiates from the essentialist view of culture as the key factor determining the success of communications. Grounded in the social theory of learning, community of practice, this study takes the stance that culture is a process of socialisation, empathising the important role of context and of community members. Theoretical reviews examine broader literature of different year groups (not just higher education), as the theories drawn from the formative educational experiences in other levels of studies can also shed light on international students' experiences in higher education.

3.2 Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is a complicated sociocultural process involving communication across different cultures in different contexts. Beside language, intercultural communication is closely related to thought patterns, values and social attributes, which all play significant roles in mutual understanding and communication (Gudykunst, 2005). All communication takes place in a sociocultural environment or context that influences the communication patterns and interlocutors' behaviours. In the educational context, we tend to adopt the communication patterns and views of learning that are prevalent in the culture in which we grow up; higher education classrooms are one such setting where

intercultural communication is affected by the values, customs and rules of a given culture or cultures (J. Liu, 2002). However, there are competing opinions about the levels of influences of culture on students' communication and participation in classrooms. This section conceptualises culture and discusses its roles in classroom participation by critiquing the existing literature that applies culture as an analytical framework to investigate classroom interactions. In addition, I highlight and problematise the prevalent binary view of voice and silence.

3.2.1 Culture in the Intercultural Classroom

Culture is a difficult concept to define. Kroeber and Kluchhohn (1963) review different conceptualisations and definitions of culture and arrive at a list of 156 different definitions. Piller (2017) estimates that there would be about 300 to 400 different definitions of culture if one were to compile a similar list today. For example, Parekh (2000) defines culture as a historically generated system of meaning and significance and a collection of beliefs and behaviours particular to a group of people to negotiate their individual and collective lives. This indicates Parekh's assumption of cultural differences among distinctive cultural groups and the role of culture in structuring and regulating people's lives. Alternatively, Gramsci (2000) conceptualises culture as the creative meaning-making process, constantly being produced and reproduced by multiple groups. Gramsci perceives culture as the means by which people make sense of the social world and negotiate their connection and relation to the society and world. S. Liu, Volcic, and Gallois (2014) understand culture as the way of life that is specific to a group of people and which consists of "the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, traditions, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, worldviews, material objects, and geographic territory" (p.57). They emphasise that all aspects of humans' lives are reflections of culture. Scholars have attempted to define culture from different perspectives, but there is a common agreement that culture is

pervasive in people's life and greatly affects their behaviours.

The scope of culture is often defined in relation to nationality, recognising differences among various nations and states (Covarrubias, 2007; Foeman, 2006), and nationality is still applied as an analysis unit in intercultural communication studies. One of most famous frameworks of national cultures, Hofstede's (1986) six-dimensional model of cultural differences, also distinguishes culture based on unit of nation. This cultural framework was greatly acclaimed and widely quoted when it first emerged, but it has sparked more debate in recent years. Holliday (2010) criticises it for encouraging stereotypes and labelling. Instead, Holliday (1999) suggests two cultural paradigms: 'large cultures' and 'small cultures'. Large culture refers to "ethnic, national and international groupings", while small culture is associated with "any identifiable or cohesive social group". Applying the idea of small culture to the classroom, small cultures can be "any type of group that shares activities or cohesive behaviour, and thus these could range from a class group to a bigger institutional group" (Montgomery, 2010, p. 17). Montgomery questions the link between certain behaviours and particular nationalities as random and emphasises cultural diversity among people of the same nationality. Fritz, Chin and DeMarinis (2008) argue that the homogenous categorisation of culture will lead to the loss of the uniqueness of the subgroups and insufficient consideration of their socialisation patters and negotiating processes. There is no neat and linear boundary among different cultures, so relying on nation or states as the unit of analysis has both theoretical and practical limitations.

According to Piller (2017), researchers should eschew a predetermined definition of culture if they aim for a meaningful, sound and socially relevant study of intercultural communication in increasingly interconnected world. Similarly, Street (1993) notes that there is very little point in trying to say what 'culture' is. What we can say, he argues, is what culture *does*. Instead of understanding culture

as a noun, it is better understood as a verb: "Culture is an active process of meaning making and contest over definition, including its own definition. This, then, is what I mean by arguing that *Culture is a verb*" (Street, 1993, p. 25). Rather than being understood as an entity whose existence is presupposed, culture as a verb describes its elusive and fluid nature as an ongoing negotiating process. From a critical intercultural communication perspective, Moon (2010) frames culture as a space of contestation and struggle from the constraints of social structures and ideologies instead of shared beliefs, values and behaviours. Moon questions the shared and stable notion of culture and acknowledges its interactive nature.

It is an essentialist view to treat culture as the common features shared by a group of people or a category to which they belong. By contrast, treating culture as a verb, free from presupposed definitions, forms a constructive view that is open to different interpretations in specific contexts (Piller, 2017). Welikala and Watkins (2008) claim that culture is not immutable, nor do people speak for their culture; the research they conducted with 40 international students demonstrates that student voices are sometimes paradoxical. For example, one of their research participants complained about group discussion as a dominant pedagogical practice, while calling for group discussions in answering another question. They (2008: p.5) come up with the concept of 'cultural script' to describe the generalised action knowledge that informs how individuals understand a situation and that guides their behaviour in a specific context. They argue that the cultural script provides a reference to understand students' behaviours without constraining the interpretations to rules and rigid schemas. Furthermore, applying culture as an explanatory factor risks oversimplifying the complex context of socio-culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. Shi (2010) describes international students' cross-cultural experience in their new learning context as a co-construction process, arguing that students do not passively accept or internalise the new norms and values, but that they reframe and reconstruct the

cultural modes in the new community by negotiating their participation.

This study acknowledges the influence of people's home culture but treats the intercultural classroom experience as an interactive process in which students negotiate between the original and the target culture. Not everyone will conform to a universal cultural trend, and cultures are continually changing and developing. Culture is neither deterministic nor static, but a dynamic notion (Welikala, 2011). Culture is examined in this study "as a matter of education and socialisation which sees students developing ways of being and behaving" through their continued involvement in the target intercultural classroom (Dippold, 2015, p. 73). The notion of culture applied in this study reflects a contextually built, fluid meaning that transcends the domain of national cultures.

3.2.2 Cultural Dimensions of Learning among International Students in Higher Education

International students' learning is mediated and shaped by their own cultural scripts for learning, which affects how students view their and others' roles, and expected behaviours (Welikala, 2013). Block (2007) describes that when participants attend classes at universities abroad, they find that the experience is very different from what they have been accustomed to back home; they are learning not only about the content of their course, but also about the local educational and cultural norms. Correspondent with the disputed theoretical discussion of the conceptualisations of culture, there have been very different opinions in the literature about the impact of cultural influences on international students' learning and classroom experiences. The first trend of research reflects the essentialist view of culture and attempts to summarise different dimensions of cultural norms and interpret how they may influence students' learning or cause difficulties and conflicts. This is a prevailing explanatory factor for students' and instructors' interaction patterns and the interpretation of their perceptions of classroom participation (Dippold, 2015). By contrast, taking the critical and

constructivist view, the second group of studies recognises the changes in cultures and see learning as a social and interactive process. They challenge the notion of culture as providing a unified description of international students' characteristics or as the determining factor behind their participation difficulties.

The prevalent discussion in the first strand of studies is to compare the East and the West, contrasting Confucian philosophy with Western ideologies. For example, Tweed and Lehman (2002) describe that in many Western cultural contexts, learning and classroom activities are grounded in Socratic tradition. By contrast, East Asia is more influenced by Confucian ideologies. Ballard and Clanchy (1991, p. 34) distinguish "fundamentally differing cultural approaches to knowledge and education" and they come up with the concepts of the "reproductive approach to learning" and the "ultimately speculative approach" to refer to the memorisation learning styles of Asian countries as opposed to the critical method of the West. Exploring Chinese students' unwillingness to use English in conversations, Wen and Clément (2003) argue that the issue is rooted in Confucian philosophy in terms of the social nature of self and traditional teaching customs of Confucian ideologies: great respect for the teacher as knowledge transmitter, rote learning and uncritical acceptance of information. Carson and Nelson (1994) apply a collectivism cultural framework to explain why Japanese and Chinese students struggle to do group work in ESL writing, pointing out that it is supposed to be inappropriate to make critical comments on others' writing, as this may disrupt the harmony of the group. Through differentiating Western and non-Western cultural dimensions of learning, the existing studies tend to emphasise the dominance and supremacy of the Western educational philosophies, leading to the stereotypes of international students (Ryan and Louie,2007).

In addition to distinguishing Eastern from Western cultural learning theories, the first trend of studies tends to apply a priori cultural dimensions to interpret teaching and learning practices. For example, Parrish and Linder-Vanberschot

(2010) compile a learning framework to describe the spectrum of cultural differences, citing eight dimensions: equality and authority, individualism and collectivism, nurture and challenge, stability seeking and uncertainty acceptance, logic argumentation and being reasonable, causality and complex systems, clock time and event time, and linear time and cyclical time. Under the theoretical framework of cultural individualism and collectivism, Lee (2007) carries out a survey among 131 East-Asian students at a US university to test the influence of language and culture on students' participation. There is an underlying assumption that there are uniform distinctions between individualism and collectivism. Applying the concept of learning style differences, De Vita (2001) investigates the ineffectiveness of traditional methods of instruction among students of different backgrounds. De Vita's research assumes that students from different cultures would have different approaches to learning and overlooks the contextual factors.

By contrast, the other group of studies recognises the changes in educational cultures and sees learning as a social and interactive process. The second strand of studies problematises the application of linear and neat categories of different learning theories or cultural framework to explain students' learning activities. Shi (2006) argues that Confucianism is a multidimensional concept and it is deterministic to single out one of the claims to explain all phenomena. She presents that students in a Shanghai suburb express their preference for having equality with the teacher, are critical of teachers' knowledge and welcome interactive classroom activities, all of which contradicts the traditional understanding of Confucian doctrine. Marlina (2009) concurs with Shi's view and argues that Confucianism has changed from 770 BC to 21st century to meet new political and social demands. Thus, application of traditional and partial understandings of Confucian ideology to interpret current education issues is accompanied by the risk of overgeneralisation and bias. Welikala and Watkins (2008) reveal that students from different cultures reflect diverse cultural scripts, as they do not leave their learning habits at home. Instead, they regard learning

in the new environment as a negotiation between their previous learning habits and those of the new learning environment. They summarise three main activities: talking, writing and reading; and they identify three different relationships of learning: peer-interaction, the teacher's role and status, and participation in sessions, as presented in Figure 3-1.

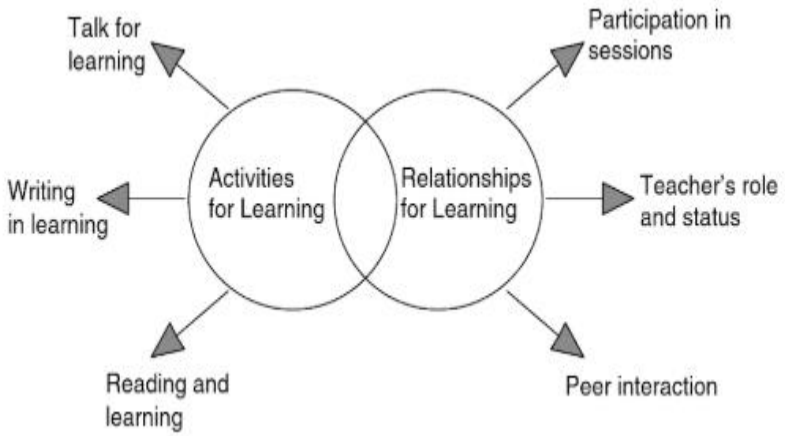

Figure 3-1 Cultural scripts for learning (Welikala & Watkins, 2008)

Instead of prescribing cultural dimensions of learning, this framework provides reference to relevant activities and relationships to investigate within the process of learning. With the development of educational and sociocultural theories, researchers should be more aware of developments and changes in society and education. Following the framework of cultural scripts for learning, this study takes a close look at those aspects as presented in Figure 3-1 to explore international students' negotiation of learning in the new context of intercultural classrooms.

3.2.3 Perceptions of Voice and Silence

This section describes different interpretations of voice and silence in the field of intercultural communication. I am not categorising these verbal and nonverbal cultural phenomena in a rigid way or assuming cultures should exist in a unified

form; I am attempting to present diversities in interpreting and understanding voice and silence within and across cultures. Traditional intercultural communication scholars tend to distinguish different communication styles and identify different communication codes, both verbal and nonverbal, according to cultural variations. For example, Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) identify four communication styles to conceptualise cultural differences in verbal communication process: direct/indirect, elaborate/succinct, personal/contextual, and instrumental/affective communication styles. They differentiate interlocutor's intentions, quantity of talk, status of speaking, and orientation under the framework of cultural dimensions. Examples like this promote cultural stereotypes of the presupposed features of the dimensions of individualist and collectivist, low and high context and other categories of cultures. However, these kinds of categories and distinction among communication styles are still common in intercultural communication handbooks (e.g. S. Liu, Volcic, & Gallois, 2014; Sorrells, 2015).

Another stereotype in the literature is the prevalent binary view of voice and silence, normally discussed through comparing and contrasting Western and Asian cultures. The Western conceptualisation of voice and silence is often mutually exclusive, with voice often privileged over silence (Hao, 2011). West-centric researchers tend to privilege the Western way of thinking and being. Bosacki (2005) echoes Hao's claim that the Western society prioritises and values verbal skills over other skills for expressing one's perspectives and feelings, and it is a prevailing trend that an absence of voice or a lack of verbal skills is an immediate association with the concept of silence. Cultural stereotypes around voice lead to commonly negative perceptions of silence, as it does not conform to presumptions about the nature of participation and interaction (Ollin, 2008). Wink (2005) conceptualises silence as harmful and powerless and suggests that silence should be broken. Due to the ambiguous and complex nature of silence, it is difficult to interpret and can invite misunderstanding. Silence is a different form of

articulation with multiple meanings. For example, Sobkowiak (1997, p. 43) categorises silence into five types: 1) refraining from speech, 2) absence of sound, 3) withholding knowledge, 4) failure to communicate, and 5) oblivion or obscurity. Silence and voice form a continuum of communication.

Speech and silence are not merely different forms of dialogue or the exchange of ideas, but they represent a shift of power (A. Jones, 2004). The discussion of silence is usually linked with the concept of power and status in a community. Cho (2012) sees voice as being directly linked to agency and the embodiment of power. Fivush (2010, p. 88) makes a distinction between "being silenced" and "being silent", describing "being silenced" as an imposed action signifying a loss of power and identity, while "being silent" is "a shared understanding that need not be voiced". Silencing reveals imbalanced power relationships between individuals and between groups, and it can have oppressive impacts. The key to providing voice to the silenced is to empower them. However, Li (2004) argues, "the polarising of the silencers and the silenced seems to oversimplify the power structure within and beyond the educational institution" (p.70). Instead, there is a constant interaction between silence and speech due to tensions between culturally dominant norms and those of the deviation.

The polarisation of voice and silence leads to the primacy of voice in educational settings. Often being misinterpreted and devalued, silence means more than an absence or a lack of speech and encompasses broader multi-dimensional aspects of participation in class, including visual, listening and spatial. There is a need to re-examine the roles of silence and to break underlying stereotypes. Commonly viewed as the opposite of voice, silence is functionally equivalent to voice (Li, 2004). Silence should not be seen as the opposite or inferior to voice (Hao, 2011). Sobkowiak (1997) argues that no unified definition of silence should be sought, but that silence should be examined critically in different contexts and in different situations. This study rejects the binary construction of voice and silence and

believes that the success of intercultural communication depends not only on cultural norms but also on contextual and personal traits, and most importantly on mutual understanding among the interlocutors. Norms of communication have to be shared to achieve understanding.

3.3 Pedagogy

> "Pedagogy is not a mere matter of teaching technique. It is a purposive cultural intervention in individual human development, which is deeply saturated with the values and history of the society and community in which it is located. Pedagogy is the act of teaching together with the ideas, values and collective histories that inform, shape and explain that act" (Alexander, 2008, p. 92).

Pedagogy provides a bigger picture of the underlying theories, values, and justifications rather than simply the teaching act. Corresponding to cultural norms and curriculum policy, pedagogy informs teaching and learning practices that have structure and form, and are situated in and governed by space, time and patterns (Alexander, 2009). International students coming from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds are challenged by pedagogical practices, while simultaneously challenging those practices in turn, which may result in interactional misunderstandings and frictions due to disparities in expectations (Dippold, 2015). Offering a culturally responsive and appropriate pedagogy to the diverse student population is one of the challenges faced by contemporary higher education institutions (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2011). This section discusses the influence of culture on pedagogy and the development of intercultural pedagogies to accommodate the trend of internationalisation, and it also conceptualises classroom participation.

3.3.1 Culture and Pedagogy

There is a strong connection between culture and pedagogy, which inform each other. Alexander (2001, p. 4) suggests that pedagogy is a "window on the culture

of which it is a part, and on that culture's underlying tensions and contradictions as well as its publicly declared policies and purposes". The micro level of culture in the classroom is closely related to the macro sociocultural context, as institutions and classrooms, under the influence of a larger culture, are micro-cultures in their own right within a pluralistic world (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Ladson – Billings, 1995). Culture plays a significant role in affecting and legitimating what is taught, while pedagogy specifies teaching the "routine, rule and ritual" of a micro-culture and regulates the complex dynamics of student-teacher and student-student relationships (Alexander, 2009, p. 6). The discontinuity between a student's experience at home and their experience at school can lead to "unauthentic and ineffective" teaching and learning; thus, pedagogy should take on the task of mediating the cultural gap (Zyngier, 2016).

The presumed superiority of Western pedagogical approaches to education characterises the trend of universities' internationalisation (Cousin, 2011). The 'best practice' is, more often than not, generated in and borrowed from Western/Northern contexts, while the contemporary prevailing but contested orientation of pedagogical changes has been toward learner-centred education (Schweisfurth & Elliott, 2019). The notion of teacher as 'facilitator' is essential to Anglo-Saxon pedagogy (Alexander, 2009), whereas teacher instruction is seen as an indispensable part of teaching and learning in non-Western countries. Influenced by the modern social theory of learning, the higher education classroom in the UK is widely characterised by dialogic, communicative and interactive communication patterns (Dippold, 2015). However, locally appropriate pedagogical traditions may turn out to be inappropriate and unsuitable for students from different backgrounds (Schweisfurth, 2013). Doherty and Singh (2005) find the idealised version of Western pedagogy problematic; they argue that the versions of pedagogy created for international students continue along the lines of 'How the West is done' rather than enacting necessary pedagogic changes. Instead, they reinforce the position of international students as 'other'.

Welikala (2013) argues that higher education pedagogic practices do not adequately address the diverse student cohort in the context of UK universities. Differences between international students' previous learning culture and the host university's pedagogic approaches cause tensions. Schweisfurth (2013) is highly critical of a growing tendency to implant the assumed 'best pedagogical practices' from one context to another with little consideration of the target learners' cultural and historical backgrounds. It is problematic to apply the Western pedagogical approach to the diverse student cohort, consisting of multi-cultural international students and domestic students, without sufficient pedagogical consideration and modifications.

However, culture does not have a deterministic influence on pedagogy. Rather, pedagogical practices change according to the micro-culture of each classroom and the people involved. A comparative educational enquiry reveals that classroom actions are not always culturally specific and there are some pedagogical universals across cultures (Zyngier, 2016). For example, the ubiquitous use of "shh…shh" in classrooms all over the world suggests a teaching universal. Alexander (2008) claims that "individualism, community and collectivism" (p.97) constitute the organisational nodes of pedagogy. Individualism and collectivism here do not refer to cultural dimensions, but to individual students and the collective class to describe the social and political relations among students, groups and classes within the classroom setting. The differences among these units greatly affect the dynamics and communication relationships of classroom interactions. For example, different arrangements of desks (e.g., in a square or in rows) provoke distinctive dynamics of classroom interactions, while the teacher's decision to stand or sit in various positions generates a different pedagogical relationship.

Alexander's (2001) comparative study of the relationship between culture and pedagogy in five countries – England, France, India, Russia and the United States

– examines macro and micro cultures on three levels: nation, school and classroom. Alexander compiles a culture-neutral model with nine 'invariants' to analyse pedagogy and contextualise classroom interaction, including "space, student organisation, time and pace, subject-matter, routines, rules and rituals, learning task, teaching activity, student differentiation for teaching and teacher assessment of learning" (p.93). These nine factors provide pedagogical language and reference points to describe the teaching acts and relevant elements.

In alignment with the perception of culture as dynamic, fluid and ever-changing, this study differentiates from the essentialist or over-determining view of the linkage between culture and pedagogy while acknowledging their mutual influences. Drawing on Alexander's (2001) framework of the culture-neutral model, this study positions pedagogy in the nexus of culture and social relations, closely observing the nine 'invariants', to deconstruct and analyse the pedagogies used in specific contexts. This dialogic exploratory process is helpful in examining cultural universals and differences based on a non-essentialist view of pedagogical practices and their corresponding influences.

3.3.2 Intercultural Pedagogies

In response to the global trends of interculturalism and the internationalisation of higher education, researchers advocate the development of intercultural pedagogies to raise intercultural awareness and celebrate cultural diversity within the new context (De Vita, 2007). Distinct from pedagogy for intercultural education, intercultural pedagogies aim to develop students' intercultural competence and to accommodate diverse learning styles and create an inclusive classroom atmosphere, which requires education practitioners' pedagogical awareness and skills (Lixian Jin & Cortazzi, 2006). One of the most significant responsibilities of higher education in a contemporary context is to prepare students for an increasingly internationalised, interconnected and diverse world (Krutky, 2008). The mass tragedies in recent years in which people have been

attacked or killed based on their religions or ethnicities have revealed the tensions and consequences resulting from different perceptions of sociocultural and human differences (A. Lee, 2017). Pedagogical practices that address intercultural issues will help students to be critically aware of their own cultural norms, assumptions and thoughts, and thus to engage with diverse peers respectfully and effectively in the classroom and beyond.

Both international students and domestic students need to be actively involved in intercultural experiences and exposed to intentional practices that seek to achieve an understanding of the 'other' (A. Lee, Poch, Smith, Kelly, & Leopold, 2018). Contemporary studies present various issues affecting relations between international and domestic students, such as lack of meaningful inclusion and integration, low levels of a sense of belonging and discomfort at being in intercultural contexts (Dippold, 2015; Knight, 2011b; Marginson, 2013). Intercultural pedagogy plays an important role in increasing and facilitating cross-cultural interactions and building up students' confidence and competence to engage in intercultural activities.

Intercultural pedagogy is an essential part of teaching practices in all disciplines, rather than a supplement or an individual course. The new learning context exposes instructors of all disciplines to intercultural classrooms with more culturally and linguistically diverse student populations than ever. As Lee (2017, p. 15) asserts:

> "You are teaching in intercultural classrooms regardless of whether you want to, or are aware of it, whether you think it is your responsibility or relevant to your discipline. It isn't a choice, because human diversity is present in and impacts every classroom, regardless of whether it is visible and whether it is solicited".

The new classroom setting brings challenges and pitfalls for instructors to cover their teaching content while supporting students' intercultural development. It is

an uncomfortable process for instructors to move from “a master of content” to “a non-master of intercultural pedagogy” (p.41); it requires them to pay critical attention to their own identities, beliefs, and “commitment to make intentional, informed decisions that enable their courses to engage and support diversity and inclusion” (p.15). Intercultural thinking under the guidance of intercultural pedagogy provides instructors with the motivation and resources to modify their teaching practices and to motivate students to engage more deeply with cultures other than their own. Within the intercultural-based framework, there has been a development of pedagogies in higher education, offering fresh perspectives on pedagogical ideologies and practices. Applying a different title but with similar aims, Burney (2012) develops the “pedagogy of the Other” to bring marginalised voices and identities in educational contexts to the centre. Burney claims that this theory can empower marginalised students and enable them to reclaim their voice. However, she criticises the term ‘interculturalism’ for reinforcing the notion of ‘Otherness’ because the theory encourages people to learn from and connect with the ‘Other’. Instead, she advocates the use of inclusiveness and interdisciplinary to emphasise a sense of belonging and hybridity.

Welikala (2013) promotes the construct of international pedagogy to meet the development needs of the internationalisation of higher education. Pedagogically increasing intercultural awareness in the classroom is intended to affect students’ classroom participation positively. However, Ryan (2011) argues that contemporary discussions of the internationalisation of higher education often look at the curriculum and pedagogy reforms as problematic issues to address, but neglect the advantages that the trend brings: sources of intercultural knowledge and understanding. Instead, Ryan calls for a transcultural approach of culturally inclusive teaching and learning to reposition international students as ‘assets’ to internationalising and generating new knowledge and new ways of learning rather than as ‘problems’ to be solved. Ryan’s reflection on education practitioners’ attitudes, values and practices presents a critical gaze at the current

internationalised and intercultural context of higher education and recognises the value of international students.

Although these intercultural pedagogies focus on different aspects of teaching and learning practices with different titles, there is a common emphasis on inclusion and diversity. Moving beyond the inclusive modes of accessing and delivering higher education, Ryan and Tilbury (2013) propose 'flexible pedagogies' with clearly future-oriented aim of building up learners' capabilities to engage with the future and to negotiate constant change. Ryan and Tilbury emphasise that pedagogical change is essential to make sure higher education responds to societal needs and fulfils its educational purposes. They argue that 'flexibility' should be viewed as "the ability of people to think, act, live and work differently in complex, uncertain and changeable scenarios", applicable to both learners and educators (p.4). Six 'new pedagogical ideas' form the foundation of the 'flexible pedagogies' (as presented in Figure 3-2 below): "learner empowerment", "future-facing education", "decolonising education", "transformative capabilities", "crossing boundaries", and "social learning" (p.5).

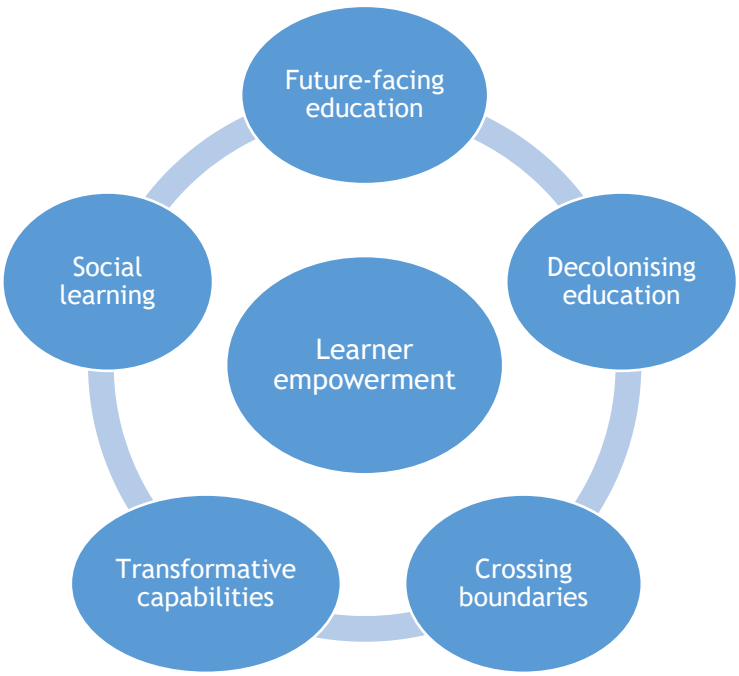

Figure 3-2 Flexible pedagogies-new ideas (Ryan & Tilbury, 2013, p.14)

The first theme, 'learner empowerment', communicates the active role of students in breaking down hierarchies and reshaping teaching and learning processes. The idea of 'future-facing education' involves the educational vision of critical and creative abilities to anticipate and deal with complex, uncertain situations in the future. 'Decolonising education' refers to "deconstructing dominant pedagogical frames that promote singular worldviews" (Ryan & Tilbury, 2013, p.20) in order to promote students' intercultural understanding and experiences. Corresponding to Turner and Robson's (2008) transformative approach of internationalisation (as discussed in Chapter Two), the theme of 'transformative capabilities' emphasises students' capabilities in learner autonomy, adaptive and transferring abilities to apply knowledge and skills. The last idea of 'crossing boundaries' is concerned with "integrative and systemic approaches to knowledge and learning" (p.24), enabling students to integrate and apply interdisciplinary knowledge and skills in new contexts.

This framework of six ideas connects conceptual, theoretical and empirical dimensions of education and provides pedagogical guidance for education planning and practice. Centrally positioned, learner empowerment acts as the nexus, interacting with the other five factors. It presents Ryan and Tilbury's emphasis on the significance of "shifting learning relationships" in their flexible pedagogy. Echoing Ryan's (2011) understanding of international students as 'assets', flexible pedagogy emphasises the significance of active student engagement in 'co-creation' of the academic practice. Highlighting flexibility as an attribute for both students and instructors, Ryan and Tilbury's flexible pedagogies rethink the nature of the university and the value of learning to provide democratic and inclusive learning practices. This study draws on the framework of flexible pedagogy as a reference but does not take it as prescriptive guidance for the observation and exploration of pedagogies used in the actual postgraduate classes. Flexible

pedagogies provide an essential and open structure to investigate teaching and learning practices, and their underlying pedagogical ideologies.

3.3.3 Conceptualising Classroom Participation

The definition of classroom participation is elusive and contested. There is a common tendency among instructors to relate classroom participation to verbal engagement: asking and answering questions, and participating in group discussions and debates (Straker, 2016). However, silent but attentive listening could also be recognised as a form of participation for students who are mentally engaged (Thom, 2010; Trahar, 2010). Carroll (2015) defines participation as active engagement and argues that both silent thinking and speaking constitute participation, but in different forms (thinking as cognitive participation and speaking as verbal participation). Pedagogy plays an important role in conceptualising classroom participation and in the interpretation of voice and silence. Different pedagogical beliefs require and expect different levels of student participation and may even cause a gap in expectations between international students and academic staff. In Western classrooms, participative and facilitative teaching approaches are supposed to be superior to teacher-centred and knowledge transmission approaches. Verbal participation and interaction is thus equated with learning and critical thinking (Turner, 2013).

However, the dominance of participative learning or learner-centred education has been criticised as a Western pedagogy unsuitable for some cultural contexts and as a way of imposing instructors' own values and beliefs on the classroom (C. J. Elliott & Reynolds, 2014; Schweisfurth & Elliott, 2019). The value and aims of the dominance of speech within Western classrooms represent its cultural construct, "giving primacy to the role of vocal communication in teaching and learning process", a view which "exists relatively unchallenged" (Ollin, 2008, p. 266). Influenced by Vygotsky's (1962) emphasis on the significant role of social interaction in the development of cognitive ability, group work and interactive

activities are widely applied to get students to talk to each other. However, "social learning theory has been confused with 'sociable' learning theory" (Ollin, 2008, p.278) in that social interaction is often equated with verbal engagement, while Vygotsky also highlighted the internalisation of cognitive development from "vocalised cognitive processes to silent inner speech" (p.267).

The benefits of verbal participation are widely recognised and usually linked with engagement, critical thinking abilities and knowledge generation. For example, Weaver and Qi (2005) argue that students who actively speak up in class learn more than those who do not because they recognise the significant role of classroom participation in promoting critical thinking abilities and in fostering knowledge creation. Similarly, Auster and MacRone (1994) equate the quality of participation to its quantity as they assume that if a student asks or answers more questions, they try out more new ideas. They believe that verbal participation has a long-term influence on students' intellectual and personal growth because verbal participation improves their communicative competence.

However, verbal participation does not always arise from critical thinking processes or careful consideration. Some researchers are critical of the quality of speech and question its contribution to the classroom. Kumpulainen and Wray (2003) agree that student participation provides students with more opportunities to question, reflect on and practice ways of knowing and thinking. However, they argue that the interactive classroom mode does not guarantee meaningful learning experience and that special attention should be paid to the patterns and content of students' interactions in scaffolding or challenging their thinking. There is a significant difference between 'speech' and 'verbal engagement', as 'speech' describes physical sound, which can be random, while 'verbal engagement' requires active thinking and processing efforts. Ollin (2008) makes a distinction between vocalisation and verbalisation and he argues that there is no direct link between vocalisation and learning. Classroom activities involve a broader sense of

verbalisation, including silent interaction with materials and thinking time, whereas vocalisation refers to immediate voiced responses. Silence can be used as slowing down time, allowing students to absorb the information and to promote further interactions between students and teachers (Li, 2004).

In addition, silence, as a classroom participation pattern, is in different forms resulting from different reasons. Echoing Fivush's categories of silence as 'being silent' and 'being silenced' from a sociological perspective as discussed above, Kurzon (1997) distinguished different linguistic models of silence as 'intentional silence' and 'unintentional silence' from psychological perspective. Intentional silence is usually a deliberate strategy to cope with a certain situation, while unintentional silence describes unwilling silence, which often comes with frustration and embarrassment. Synthesising Fivush's notions of 'being silent' and 'being silenced' with Kurzon's concepts of intentional and unintentional silence, this study expands them into a new category as "proactive silence" and "reluctant silence" to better reflect students' active choice, agency and power in the negotiating process. Although all categorisations refer to the same phenomena and 'intentional' also describes students' proactive role in choosing to be silent, unintentional silence cannot describe the reluctance in the situation when students are relegated to a marginalised position in class. Students who represent proactive silence choose to keep quiet in class take silence as acceptable and normal behaviour. In contrast, students who engage in reluctant silence are simply unable to speak up, which usually comes with anxiety or frustration.

The silence discussed in existing studies about international students' classroom participation is normally about the 'reluctant silence'. However, there is limited discussion or recognition of the benefits of 'proactive silence'. Silence has pedagogical benefits that are often neglected in the teaching and learning process. Beyond its instrumental value, silence has more intrinsic pedagogical merits, allowing for reflections and the reinforcement of knowledge. Cropley (2001)

suggests that rather than overt verbal communication with others, students can engage in silent interaction with resources such as written texts or digital devices.

In summary, different pedagogies inform different classroom interaction patterns and different beliefs about the roles of verbal participation in the process of learning. The definition of classroom participation is contested considering the different aims of different classes. Although the benefits of verbal participation are widely recognised, its value and quality are difficult to measure. Both voice and silence have an important role to play in the classroom participation process. Essential to an understanding of culture, and critical to this study, is the fact that the lived classroom experience of international students cannot be fully explained by cultural or pedagogical theories. Instead, it is more context specific. The next section presents the conceptual framework of this study by examining classroom as community.

3.4 Community of Practice: Situated Learning Theory

This study is grounded in the situated learning theory that views learning as a social, cultural and contextual activity rather than just an individual, decontextualised and cognitive one. Corresponding to the social understanding of learning, 'community of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) is a theoretical model that argues that the process of learning is achieved through participating in the practices of the community, while acquiring knowledge and developing identities accordingly (Handley, Sturdy, Fincham, & Clark, 2006). As a generative theoretical framework that is widely used to understand, explain and structure data across a wide range of disciplines (Tight, 2015), community of practice provides a framework to address the research questions, forms the basis for the understanding of learning, sets the scope of this study and connects the key concepts associated with learning (Haneda, 2006).

As well as community of practice, socialisation is another theory that has been widely used by sociologists, anthropologists and educationalists to explain the learning process of newcomers from the old comers as the acquisition of the knowledge, norms, and skills necessary to perform as members of their new group or society (Colvin, Volet, & Fozdar, 2014) and thus as "the means by which social and cultural continuity are attained" (Clausen, 1968, p. 5) Similarly, in applied linguistics, language socialisation is viewed as the process of mastering "linguistic conventions, pragmatics, the adoption of appropriate identities, stances or ideologies, and other behaviours associated with the target group and inter normative practices" (Duff, 2007, p. 310). However, the theory of socialisation neglects the fact that learning is an interactive process of studying or living with social and cultural diversities rather than a one-way process of adaptation. Corresponding to Holliday's (1999) idea of 'small culture' as discussed above, community of practice moves away from ethnic, national or any other form of deterministic grouping, acknowledges the situated and contextual nature of learning, and thus reduces the tendencies to assume it is one party's responsibility to adapt or to stereotype groups of students.

In addition to the recognition of the interactive, fluid and ongoing nature of learning, community of practice has its value in interconnecting the concepts of participation and identity within specific classroom communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The prevailing identity theories seek to define and interpret people through various categorisations, structures, identifications and comparisons (Hogg, 2016; Stets & Burke, 2000). For example, Tajfel and Turner (1979) state that we categorise people in order to understand them, sorting them into such social categories as black and white, Christian and Muslim, student and teacher. Similarly, Hogg (2016) argues that the key perceptions of social identity theory are that people tend to categorise themselves and others into social groups, which in turn affect their ways of interacting with others based on their perceived social statuses. Differentiating from the prevailing identity theories, community of

practice does not aim to generate categories of different identities but instead argues the significance of the self, interaction and the context within which the person is situated. Viewing identities as "long-term, living relations between persons and their place and participation in communities" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 53), the model of community of practice provides an effective analytical tool to investigate the relationship between identity and participation in contexts.

Regarding the classroom as a community of practice, this section discusses how it is used as a guide to theorise and interpret participation in intercultural university classrooms. Bearing in mind the complex and multifaceted nature of this model, this study limits its application to its involvement with two concepts: legitimate peripheral participation and learner identities, which have been extensively explored in higher education classrooms.

3.4.1 The Classroom as a Community of Practice

The term 'community of practice' was coined by Lave and Wenger in 1991 and further extended by Wenger in 1998 as a social learning theoretical framework to analyse and understand the learning process. Advocating the social nature of learning, Lave and Wenger (1991) proposed situated learning theory in opposition to the cognitive conceptualisation of learning as individual acquisition of knowledge. Situated learning theory emphasises that knowledge should be understood relationally rather than as something static stored in a human being's brain. It is more about the dynamic of changing relationships between learners and the particular communities in which they are involved. Learning is thus perceived as an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice that involves the construction of identity through changing forms of participation in communities of practice (Handley et al., 2006). From the anthropological and situated learning perspectives, knowledge is "a property existing between individuals and cultures, involving practices in context" (Hoadley, 2012, p. 290) rather than a collection of cognitive structures in the head or behaviours shaped

by the environment.

A community of practice was originally defined as a group of people who share a craft or a profession (Lave & Wenger, 1991), with apprentices being described as the learning model. Wenger (1998) further extended the notion and brought in three defining characteristics that are required to exist in a community of practice: “mutual engagement”, “joint enterprise” and “shared repertoire” (p. 73). ‘Mutual engagement’ entails common passion, engagement and cooperation; Wenger claims it is mutual engagement that defines a community. ‘Joint enterprise’ refers to regular interactions among the community members and mutual accountability developed during the process. However, merely sharing the same tasks or activities does not necessitate a community of practice; it is their relationships and learning from each other that shape the community of practice. ‘Shared repertoire’ indicates the resources that community members share with each other such as previous experiences, concepts and styles. The shared repertoire is what the community creates to negotiate meaning. Joint enterprise and mutual engagement among community members in activity provide the foundation for learning, and practice and shared repertoire are key aspects of learning and identity formation (Duff, 2007, p. 315). In response to the criticism that the model primarily focuses on individual learners’ behaviours and movements within a single community of practice, Wenger (1998) introduces the concept of ‘multimembership’ and also identifies learners’ varied modes of participation in different communities of practice.

In Wenger and Trayner's (2015) more recent work, they apply the concept to wider learning domains with a broader definition: “Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.” In addition, Wenger distinguishes a community from a community of practice by three defining characteristics: the domain, the community and the practice, which are of similar meaning and

structure as the three defining characteristics (Wenger, 1998) discussed in the above paragraph, but put into simpler language. Wenger claims that a neighbourhood is often a community but not a community of practice, as it does not possess the three defining features. 'The domain', similar to 'mutual engagement', refers to a shared domain of interest and subjects. 'The community' is concerned with joint enterprise – activities and discussions that build relationships and cooperation among the community members. The third concept, 'the practice', echoes 'shared repertoire', describing shared resources, experiences and all shared practices. Emphasising the notions of practice and the community, Wenger argues that by these three dimensions of the relation, practice is the source of coherence of a community.

As a community that shares practices, the examined context of the university classroom is studied as a community of practice, containing as it does an aggregate of home and international students who are mutually engaged in the specific subject of the classroom through shared classroom activities using a shared repertoire of resources (Dippold, 2015). The joint enterprise and shared repertoire are interpreted as learning the common subject and a collection of different resources being available to students. This shared repertoire of resources is developed over time and as a collaborative effort. Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002, p. 4) state that:

> "Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis."

The classroom is not only a physical place where faculty and students come together for formal learning, but also a social space for exchanging ideas, acquiring knowledge and building values. The intercultural classroom in internationalised higher education institutions is a complex setting involving language issues, different cultures and interaction patterns (Weaver & Qi, 2005). Classroom functions as a community of learners and class members serve as

resources to each other, “taking responsibility for their contribution to their own learning and to the group’s functioning” (Rogoff, Matusov, & White, 1996, p. 397). Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) describe that the group of people develop similar ways of doing things, beliefs, values and power relations while they are engaged in a mutual endeavour. Duff highlights the important roles of sense of community and the influence of ‘old-timers’ such as instructors and home students who are used to the particular educational system. She claims that “joint enterprise or mutual engagement in activity by ‘old-timers’ and ‘newcomers’ provides the foundation for learning, and that practice and community belonging are key aspects of learning and identity formation” (Duff, 2007, p. 315).

The intercultural university classroom as a community of practice is dynamic because of the evolving relations among class members. Lave and Wenger (1991) describe a community of practice as “a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice” (p. 98). With diverse academic and sociocultural backgrounds, every student can play a role in sharing new information and bringing new resources to the target community. This study approaches classrooms as varied communities of practice and examines how participants within the learning environment combine knowledge and practice and learn through relationships with their peers and practitioners in the community.

3.4.2 Legitimate Periphery Participation

Positioning ‘legitimate periphery participation’ as the central defining feature in the framework of community of practice, Lave and Wenger (1991) treat learning as a socially situated process by which potential members of a community begin as peripheral or marginal participants, and gradually acquire the knowledge or skills necessary for fuller participation through their engagement with the community. Originating from the form of apprenticeship learning, ‘legitimate periphery participation’ describes the process that learners may initially enter the

community and participate in a tangential way, but as time passes, they move towards the centre and pick up the central practices of the community (Hoadley, 2012). This indicates Lave and Wenger's (1991) advocacy of learning in situated ways, as they argue that situated learning contributes to "the transformative possibilities of being and becoming complex, full cultural-historical participants in the world" (p.32). The concept of 'legitimate periphery participation' provides "a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artefacts, and communities of knowledge and practice" (p.29), and thus offers an analytical perspective for analysing and understanding learning.

There is an essential relationship between social participation and communities of practice because "learning is situated in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world" (Wenger, 1998, p.3). This theory of situated learning through 'legitimate periphery participation' requires situated activity, which does not merely mean activities located in space and time. The situated activities draw on theoretical views about "the relational character of knowledge and learning, about the negotiated character of meaning and about the concerned nature of learning activity" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.33). It emphasises the negotiating process of mutual understanding through interactions and communications instead of through receiving factual knowledge. Wenger, MaDermott and Snyder (2002, p. 4) describe the relationships and interactions among a community of practice:

> "These people don't necessarily work together every day, but they meet because they find value in their interactions. As they spend time together, they typically share information, insight and advice. They help each other solve problems. They discuss their situations, their aspirations, and their needs. They ponder common issues, explore ideas, and act as sounding boards."

This situated learning theory highlights the significance of regular interactions and mutual engagement among the community members in the learning process.

As a means of entry into a context, 'legitimate peripheral participation' is crucial for the individual to establish mutual engagement with other community members. However, as the concept suggests, novices should be granted enough legitimacy to move towards full participation and be regarded as potential members. The legitimacy of their participation is essential to learners' sense of belonging and community membership. The concept of 'peripheral' describes the "multiple, varied, more- or less-engaged and –inclusive ways" (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.36) of participating in the community. In addition, Lave and Wenger distinguish 'full participation' from 'central participation' and 'complete participation', suggesting that there is no uniform centre, nor a linear notion of knowledge and skills acquired as the end point of 'centripetal participation' within various communities of practice. 'Full participation' is neither 'central participation' as a physical centre of an individual's position within the community, nor 'complete participation', describing a closed domain and measurable degrees of knowledge acquisition or collective practice. Instead, 'full participation', in contrast to partial participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.37), emphasises "justice to the diversity of relations involved in varying forms of community membership".

However, not all experiences within a community of practice are positive. Participation is assumed to begin peripherally and if the newcomer is thought to be legitimate, their participation will become fuller, while if it goes the opposite way, the participation may be hindered or even stopped. Peripherality and legitimacy also describe the empowering and disempowering positions in promoting or preventing participation in communities of practice. The issue of power is essential in the process as Lave and Wenger (1991, p.103) indicate: "Control and selection, as well as the need for access, are inherent in communities of practice." Conflicts and unequal power relations play a significant role in affecting relationships and interactions within a community context. Legitimacy and peripherality describe the changing positions, power and perspectives within the community, which are also part of learners' "learning trajectories, developing

identities, and forms of membership" (p.36).

Within the concept of legitimate peripheral participation, this study investigates international students' classroom participation as a social practice within on ongoing process of joining and identifying with communities. Through exploring the student participants' relationships and interactions with their instructors and peers, this thesis investigates the concepts of 'access to experts', 'periphery', 'legitimacy' and 'full participation' to examine their influences in international students' learning process and classroom participation practices.

3.4.3 Participation as Negotiation of Identities

Situated learning theory puts a renewed focus on issues of identity. Learning is not simply about acquiring knowledge and developing practice; it also "involves a process of understanding who we are and in which communities of practice we belong and are accepted" (Hadley et al., 2006, p. 644). Wenger (1998, p.145) maintains, "Issues of identity are an integral aspect of a social learning theory and are thus inseparable from issues of practice, community, and meaning". Lave and Wenger define identities as "long-term, living relations between persons and their place and participation in communities of practice" (1991, p53), and they claim, "learning and a sense of identity are inseparable. They are aspects of the same phenomenon" (p. 115). Identity has an interactive relationship with participation and nonparticipation and modes of belonging, as well as identification and negotiability.

From the perspective of legitimate peripheral participation, learning is treated as "an evolving form of membership" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 53), while Wenger maintains that "membership in a community of practice translates into an identity as a form of competence" (1998, p. 153). Humans' perceptions and evaluations of our own and each other's identities are tied up to our memberships in groups and communities. People develop different identities as they change how they

participate in a community of practice through the multiple social relations and roles they experience (Haneda, 2006). International students' identities are multiple and varied, evolving from their daily experiences. They apply their understanding of their social roles and relationships with others to mediate their involvement and the involvement of others in their practices (Norton, 2010). Hoadley (2012) argues that the notion of learning in a community of practice has profound educational implications. Learners in a community of practice must have access to experts and must either perceive that they are members or aspire to membership in a community, in which expert practices are central. It is through the process of sharing information and experiences with the group that the members learn from each other and have an opportunity to develop themselves personally and professionally.

Leki (2001) examined the interactions and relationships between two L2 students and their domestic peers in class group projects at an American university. She applied the community of practice to illuminate that membership is not only dependent on how we place ourselves in the community, but also on how we are placed by others. The position of learners influences the development of group projects as well as the subjects' participation and identity construction in the community; this is true of both international and domestic students. Leki has shown that the international student participants were treated as novices and incompetent members by the native speaker group members. Norton (2001) recounted the experiences of five recent immigrants in an ESL course in Canada from the perspective of participation and non-participation. The role of non-participation in learners' identity construction is examined from the perspective of Wenger's (1998, p. 164) identity negotiation, in which "We not only produce our identities through the practices we engage in, but we also define ourselves through the practices we do not engage in". Furthermore, Norton applies Wenger's imagined communities to illustrate that the subjects' non-participation is due to the gap between the participants' previously self-constructed identities in their

imagined community and their current relatively incompetent status in the new community. Norton concludes that identity is constructed and negotiated through interactions with other community members.

However, not all members of a community conform to a single set of standards and values. Instead, they may stick to or reject the mainstream standards and values or adopt a mixture of conformity to and alienation from different aspects of the prevailing standards. Individuals develop identities in which they relate to the prevailing standards in a complex variety of ways. How the individuals position themselves and are positioned by others depends on where they are, who they are with and what they are doing (Block, 2009). Different classroom norms, structures and interaction patterns suggest certain kinds of student identities (Norton, 2010). Meanwhile, participants may experience different levels of access, acceptance, and immersion in the new community from what they are accustomed to in their first language community, which affects their membership in the new context (Duff, 2007). Students' identities in relation to their membership in a classroom could change over time, while students may also construct different forms of membership in different classrooms. Identities are constructed through these practices and, in return, the ways they participate in the community affect their identity. Learning is a continuing social action, interacting with the context and people involved (Morita, 2004).

Synthesising the constituting concepts of community of practice, I develop the conceptual framework of this study as presented in Figure 3-3.

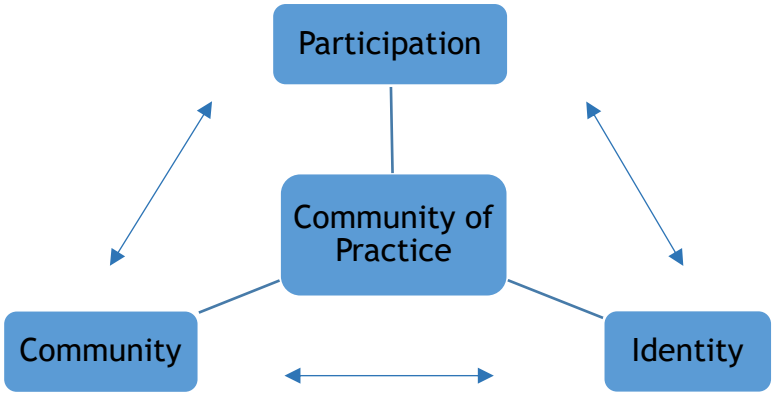

Figure 3-3 Conceptual framework

I understand intercultural classrooms as communities and treat students' classroom participation as a social practice in the particular community, which is closely related to their identities within the community. The cultural and pedagogical ideologies discussed above inform participation patterns and provide a theoretical basis to examine the process of interaction, transformation and development happening in classroom communities.

Chapter 4 Existing Research on International Students' Classroom Experiences in Higher Education

4.1 Overview

This chapter provides an integrative synthesis of the findings of existing research on international students' classroom experiences in higher education and reviews the corresponding methodological stances and methods applied in related studies. As Torraco (2005, p. 356) defines, the integrative literature review is "a form of research that reviews, critiques, and synthesises representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on that topic are generated". In addition, the methodological reviews discuss the strengths and drawbacks of the research methods used in different research projects. 'Integrative summaries' and 'methodological reviews' (Creswell, 2003) are not merely summaries describing the designs and findings of previous studies, but a demonstration of the researcher's assimilation – from a critical perspective - of what is already known. Reviewing the related studies on international students' classroom participation overseas enabled me to understand the topic and master the methods and strategies covered in the literature review, which was helpful to design and carry out this research (Torraco, 2016). I incorporate both relevant theories and empirical studies to categorise and recognise concepts relevant to the study and explore the relationships among them, which also helps to identify gaps, contradictions and refinements in the literature (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Following an overview of the literature review process, it discusses the three most salient themes identified from the literature: the perceptions of international students as 'Other', factors influencing their classroom participation and the issue of silence.

4.2 The Process of Developing and Presenting Related Studies

The review process followed the narrative review traditions while incorporating

systematic review practices (Bryman, 2012). Because of the exploratory nature of this study, narrative review enabled a process of discovery of the research topic from a less focused while wider scope of studies. Meanwhile, the systematic practices incorporated provided a structure to analyse and synthesise the studies identified and showed transparency about how searches were conducted. Known for the strength of thoroughness and systematic procedures, the approach of systematic review has emerged as a trend in recent years. However, Pearson and Coomber (2010) argue that systematic review entails the process of subjective narratives and interpretation while setting the boundaries and selecting studies for inclusion. It is criticised for its limitations in the field of social sciences where there is low consensus of key research questions and fluid boundaries of the subject. Bryman (2012) argues that the main purpose of interpretative researchers is to "enrich human discourse by generating understanding rather than by accumulating knowledge" (p. 110). A review of how existing studies and findings relate to each other and how their interrelations can be assimilated could provide a more in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the field than a replicable procedure (Hammersley, 2001). Therefore, a narrative orientated review incorporated with systematic practices is suitable for the current study.

The search for literature on international students' classroom participation started by listing keywords and the terms used were: international student*, classroom experience*, classroom participation, international student* and higher education, intercultural classroom*, and multicultural classroom* (the asterisks are for obscure searches so that the results will include different forms of the same root words, for example, student, students, studentship). Three databases were searched: Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Education Key Databases from the University of Glasgow Library Databases and snowballing strategy was only applied to hand search the reference lists of articles identified (Creswell, 2014). Only literature on international students' studies in higher education in Anglophone countries from the last 20 years, from 1999 to 2019, was selected for

review. Articles and books in Chinese were also searched during the review process; however, due to the selection criteria of research context and subjects, no relevant articles were identified in Chinese social and education research data base. Only English articles and resources were included. The review of higher education studies involved three levels of studies, including undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes. I am aware that different contextual circumstances may sometimes characterise each individual level of studies. However, a similar argument may be made for differences within the same level of different programmes as well. What emerges from the literature is that common educational issues, difficulties and strategies have been identified across the distinctive levels of studies, although they are salient to different degrees. For this reason, I have not limited myself to studies conducted at the postgraduate or master's level. Studies conducted at the undergraduate and doctoral level were also included in the review and informed the design and conduct of the current research.

Following the search procedures and criteria as listed above, 27 journal articles and two book chapters were selected for in-depth review as presented in Appendix One. Drawing on Bloomberg and Volpe's (2018) synthesis matrix, which breaks each of the studies reviewed into various categories - purpose of study, sample, methods, findings, themes, similarities and uniqueness - I compiled all the research studies reviewed within a matrix (see Appendix One), listing the participants, research context, theoretical framework, research approach and main findings. The use of the matrix is helpful to present a clear picture of the similarities and differences across all the relevant research studies and thus to identify the salient themes and related issues that emerge (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Based on Appendix One, I synthesised and grouped the most salient themes and research methods, as presented in Table 4-1, to trace the development of the research topic and to identify gaps in the literature.

Themes	Sub-themes	Sources	Methods
Theme 1: The Perception of International Students as Other	Prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination •Power imbalances •Suppressed identity and agency •Cause of declining standards •Deficits and problems	Moskal & Schweisfurth, 2018	Interviews/88 non-western international students
		Marginson, 2014	Interviews/ 290 international students
		Asmar, 2005	Interviews & Questionnaires/174 international students
	Socially and academically marginalised •Grouping of co-nationals • Monoculture domination • Lack of integration in activities	Maundeni, 2001	Interviews/29 African students
		Welikala & Watkin, (2008)	Interviews/40 international students
		Marginson et al., 2010	Interviews/200 international students
	•Devalued for academic input •Merely a source of income	Habu, 2000	Informal Interviews/25 Japanese students
Theme 2: Factors Influencing International Students' Verbal Classroom Participation	**<u>Students as analysis unit</u>** Linguistic factors: •English proficiency Socio-cultural factors: •Cross-cultural transfer •Communicative norms •Gender, age •Social interactions Pedagogical factors: •Class size, •Preparations •Time and space	Lee, 2007	Survey/131 East-Asian students
		Weaver & Qi, 2005	Questionnaires/1550 university students
		Valdez, 2015	Interviews/15 Chinese students
	<u>Instructors as analysis unit</u> Pedagogical factors: •Social interactions •Teaching approaches • Instructor and peer rapport Socio-cultural factors: •Instructors' and students' gender	Dallimore et al., 2004	Questionnaires/68 MBA graduates
		Frisby & Martin, 2010	Questionnaires/233 undergraduates
		Tatum et al., 2013	Observation study/158 students and 14 instructors
		Dippold, 2013	Interviews/3 seminar tutors
	<u>Class as analysis unit</u> Cognitive Factors: •Learning and professional backgrounds Socio-cultural factors • Identities, power •Cultural backgrounds Affective Factors:	Yeh, 2014	Interviews & observation/6 international students
		Parris-Kidd & Barnett	Phenomenological study/3 Chinese students
		Morita, 2004	Qualitative case study/6 Japanese students

	•students' characters Pedagogical factors: •Social interactions •Teaching approaches Instructor and peer rapport	Leki, 2001	Ethnographic case study/ 6 ESL students
		Liu, 2002	Case study/3 Chinese students
		Fassinger, 2000	Questionnaires/51 college classes
Theme 3: Silence of International Students	•Silence perceived as non-participation •Disempowering contexts •Silence leads to a sense of inferiority to peers •Identity disparities •English language ability	Kim, 2012	Interviews/50 Korean students
		Hsieh, 2007	Case study/1 Chinese student
	•Limited English proficiency •Different classroom mannerisms and cultures •Anxiety, frustration and isolation	Choi, 2015	Case study/2 Korean students
		Zhou et al, 2005	Interviews/10 Chinese students
		Lee, 2009	Interviews and observation/6 Korean students
	•Silence as international students' right •As a facing-saving strategy •A sign of respect •A means of participation •Silence as pedagogy	Tatar, 2005	Case study/4 Turkish students
		Ha & Li, 2014	Case study/4 Chinese students
		Nakane, 2006	Interviews/19 Japanese students

Table 4-1 Synthesis of salient themes and research methods

Although presented in a linear order and a straightforward manner, the review process was iterative and ongoing (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018), as I kept revising and adding more studies into the table. The next three sections present and critically discuss the three most salient themes and the prevailing research methodologies in detail.

4.3 The Perception of International Students as Other

An inherent part of internationalisation of universities is "the appreciation of the diversity of language and culture by students and staff, and a commitment to equality and diversity", which "involves the integration of international students in campus life and in the local community" (Koutsantoni, 2006, p. 19). However, the development of the internationalisation of universities is not as ideal as

Koutsantoni describes. Extensive research reports inequality, exclusion and challenges that international students face in their new learning context of academic classrooms at universities overseas. The large number of international students do not necessarily lead to globally minded students and academic staff (Dippold, 2015). Marginson (2013, p. 9) describes the superiority from the country of education:

> "Clearly 'our education' is superior to what 'they' have at home. And being supplicants, as it were, 'they' ought to 'adjust' to the country of education to the degree necessary to absorb its bounty".

The prevailing sense of superiority in the country of education leads to structural inequalities and power imbalances. As Moskal and Schweisfurth' s study (2018) shows through interviews with 88 non-Western international students, international postgraduates talk not only about the difficulties of engaging across the differences of language and cultural background, but also about hidden prejudices related to perceptions of otherness on both sides. International students are often portrayed as foreign others.

One of the reasons that leads to the perception of the 'Other' is the stereotypes of international students as deficient or as problems who need extra attention to adapt to the new learning environment. This assumption indicates the sense of educational superiority and misunderstanding of international education as an adaptation or adjustment to the host country and institution norms (Marginson, 2014). Through 28 interviews and 174 questionnaires answered by both international and domestic Muslim students in Australian universities, Asmar (2005) reports that the deficiencies are often associated with students' English proficiency, rote learning techniques and teacher-centred backgrounds, which even leads to the misconception that international students are leading to declining academic standards. It also reflects the prevalent research trend of "nativespeakerdom" as Ryan and Viete (2009) explain:

> "We talk of academic genres as if they were unchanging, of "rules" of argument and evidence particular to certain disciplines, of how a thesis has to be organised, what counts as critical analysis. It seems to most students that target skills are easier for "native speakers" to acquire and that their own knowledge, linguistically mediated as it is in another language, is seen as being of lesser value" (p.307).

People tend to disadvantage others when others' communication patterns do not match their own since people are usually not conscious of their own communication behaviours or interpretation of others (Dippold, 2015). Within the trend of treating international students as the cultural 'Other', international students' home country identities and cultural norms have been seen as a barrier to successful learning, but they are expected to achieve harmony with the host country and institution. Marginson (2014) argues that non-white international students usually experience discrimination or abuse while studying in Anglophone universities. Their agency has been forcibly remade under the 'adjustment' paradigm, the objective of which is to get rid of their prior values and habits and thus to install in them an imagined "Western" autonomous concept of what a learner is. Marginson criticises the downplaying of international students' active agency in the process.

The perception of otherness is often reflected in the dominance of native students and the marginalisation of international students. Knight (2011) shows that international students in many institutions feel socially and academically marginalised and their domestic peers are known to resist engaging socially or doing group projects with foreign students. This is confirmed in Marginson, Nyland, Sawir and Forbes-Mewett's (2010) study, in which they identify international students' strong desire to have social engagement with their local peers through interviews with 200 international students in Australia from 35 different countries. However, they find that the local students rarely reciprocate. Apart from social alienation, international students also struggle to integrate with domestic students in academic activities. For example, Asmar (2005) identifies difficulties

international students have in mixing with local students in collaborative activities in Australia because of different cultural and religious beliefs; Welikala and Watkin, (2008) present the tensions between international students and their tutors and peers due to their devalued contribution to classroom discussions. There is a tendency of social engagement and interaction among co-nationals and domestic students are often blamed for dominating interactions by forming groups within themselves. However, grouping among co-nationals not only happens among domestic students but is also a common phenomenon among international students. For example, Dippold's (2013) and Schweisfurth and Gu's (2009) studies both present that students commonly tend to stay in their comfort zone with peers of the same ethnic group in both their living and studying arrangements, either by active choice or due to discomfort with other forms of interactions. Maundeni (2001) report that the 29 African international students he interviewed preferred to have contact their co-national peers and had little contact with the host nationals. Maundeni highlights the negative effects of spending too much time with co-nationals as making it difficult for foreign language speakers to improve their English, and that monoethnic peer groups can cause "discrimination, domination, gossip", exerting pressure to conform and pushing out members who seek friendships outside the group (p.253). Lack of integration and contact between international students and their domestic peers is a prevailing phenomenon reported by researchers. However, the causes are contested, as in some cases it is domestic students who are reluctant to include international students, while in other cases, international students choose to stay away their host peers.

The stereotypes and misconceptions associated with international students have negative effects on the development of the internationalisation of higher education, on creating a democratic classroom, and on developing the intercultural competence of both international and domestic students. Habu's (2000) study of 25 Japanese international students in the UK shows that the

participants, who were othered, had their academic input devalued, and were regarded merely as a source of income by the host institutions and countries. In reality, international students' experiences and different perspectives can contribute to generating new knowledge and effective cross-cultural communication. Echoing this view, Asmar (2005) criticises treating difference as a shortcoming and calls for more efforts to internationalise all students within the increasingly connected and diverse world. The stereotypes of international students as the foreign 'Other' and the trend of the perceived superiority of Western education reflects the essentialist view of culture and fails to recognise its complex and fluid nature. The internationalisation of higher education should be more open to diversity and recognise the agency and value of international students.

4.4 Factors Influencing International Students' Verbal Participation

Within the new learning context of internationalised classrooms, international students are under the influence of multiple and interconnected factors to negotiate their classroom participation patterns. Five categories of factors have been synthesised from the literature based on Liu's (2002) framework: linguistic, socio-cultural, pedagogical, cognitive and affective factors. This framework fails to reflect the interconnected nature of the different factors but provides summative language to describe and categorise them, as presented in Table 4-1. While exploring the categories of influencing factors, three groups of studies have been identified with different units of analysis: individual students, instructors and the class as a group.

The first strand of studies tends to describe international students' classroom participation through their perceived difficulties in adapting to local participation styles. Individual students as the unit of analysis are researched to explore the difficulties they encounter while participating in classroom activities. Quantitative research methodology and individual interviews are often applied to

test the researchers' assumptions. In a survey of 131 East-Asian students at a US university, Lee (2007) tests the influence of language and culture on students' participation under the theoretical framework of individualism and collectivist cultures. Lee concludes that language has a dominant influence on international students' classroom participation, while there is no significant relationship between cultural factors and verbal interactions. This indicates Lee's essentialist view of culture, as he applies the prescriptive framework of culture to test the presumed variables. Applying a similar quantitative instrument, a questionnaire, Weaver and Qi (2005) test their 10 hypotheses with 1,550 undergraduate and graduate students, looking into potential factors that constrain students' verbal participation. Recognising the significance of 'active involvement' in learning both inside and outside the classroom, Weave and Qi treat participation in discussions as 'active involvement' in class and attempt to solve the 'problem' by identifying the constraining factors. They find that class size and students' gender do not show any impact on students' participation. However, a larger size class adds to their fear of criticism from the instructor, as they are concerned with losing face in public and afraid of peer disapproval. In addition, instructor-student interactions outside the classroom and preparation have positive influences on students' class participation. However, students who see the instructor as an authority of knowledge are less likely to speak up in class, and older students are more likely to participate than younger ones. Weave and Qi conclude by understanding classroom as a social organisation with formal and informal structures and by calling for faculty to foster participation with more social interactions.

Apart from quantitative survey and questionnaires, interviewing is another research method used in the group of studies examining individual international students as the analysis unit. Through individual interviews with 15 Chinese students at a US university, Valdez (2015) compares the participants' classroom practices in the US and China and investigates their perceptions of faculty's and

American peers' impressions of them. Valdez finds that most participants prefer the American classroom interactions to practices back in China, but they struggle with the stereotypes and discrimination from academic staff and peers who see them as unwilling and unable to speak in class. Students report that there is a lack of time and space for them to express their opinions and stay on track with the speed of classroom discussion. Students' 'double consciousness' of their Chinese identity and imagined negative self-image reflect their identity conflicts. This might provide a picture of Chinese students' assumptions about their own image in their instructors' and peers' eyes, but there was no discussion as to whether their comments actually reflect their instructors' or peers' perspectives.

The second strand of research recognises the dominant influence of instructors in shaping students' participation and examines instructors as the unit of analysis. Applying similar research methodologies as the first strand of studies, this group of research often investigates teaching methods, interpersonal characteristics, social interactions and the instructor's gender to examine academic staff's effect on classroom interactions. Klaveren (2011) reports that university staff's lecturing styles have a major impact on how students go about participating in classroom activities. Dallimore, Hertenstein and Platt (2004) regard classroom discussion as a significant pedagogical strategy. In order to enhance the quality and effectiveness of classroom participation, this group of authors generates pedagogical strategies from a group of 68 graduate students through questionnaires and identifies six main points: graded participation, combining knowledge and experiences, active facilitation, effective questions, supportive classroom atmosphere and constructive feedback. Their study also suggests the effectiveness of cold calling. Frisby and Martin (2010) examine the relationships between instructors and their students, and between students, to determine their roles in building positive relationships and an overall positive classroom environment. The results indicate that instructor rapport, student rapport, and classroom connectedness enhance student participation. Tatum et al. (2013)

examine the effect of students' and professors' gender on classroom participation and faculty-student interactions through an observational study. They report that there are more voluntary verbal interactions in female instructors' classes and that female instructors give more positive feedback to students, which facilitates students' participation. According to three retrospective interviews with seminar tutors reviewing and commenting on video clips of their classes, Dippold (2013) shows that like international students, instructors are challenged to negotiate norms and rituals of classroom interactions. The study identifies the 'gatekeeping power' of the tutors and the influences of their pedagogical practices. For example, instructors' ways of dealing with students' errors is crucial to the management of relationships. However, Dippold emphasises the joint efforts from all members involved to achieve effective and meaningful classroom interaction.

The third strand of studies calls for an examination of classes as groups, considering the complex nature of classroom interactions. Fassinger (2000) argues that individual analysis of students or instructors limits understanding of classroom interaction and that both class traits and students' characters play significant roles in students' classroom participation. Instead, classes should be examined as groups, including classroom norms, daily routines, and structure. In her quantitative study of 51 college classes, Fassinger reports that class size, class emotional climate and participation levels of the entire class greatly affect students' participation. Fassinger focuses on the class group as the unit of analysis by comparing the class traits of classes with high levels of student participation with those that have low levels. The research findings reveal that classes with higher participation levels are "more cooperative, supportive, respectful, and familiar to their members" (Fassinger, 2000, p. 38) and that students and instructors have a similar understanding and expectation of classroom participation. In contrast, students in classes with lower participation levels report their impression of their peers as dominant, competitive, argumentative and indifferent, which is very different to their instructor's comments.

Echoing Fassinger's belief in the influence of the class as a group, Morita (2004) reports on a qualitative case study looking at six Japanese female students' negotiation of classroom participation and identities at a Canadian university. She reports that students' English proficiency plays an important role in their participation as it affects their understanding of the teaching content as well as their expression of ideas. However, she argues that language proficiency does not guarantee students' integration in the verbal activities. Previous learning experience have significant influence on their behaviour and attitudes in the new learning environment, some of which are seen as problematic or unacceptable by their teachers or peers. Parris-Kidd and Barnett's (2011) study of three Chinese students in ESL classrooms at an Australian university also confirms that the differences in cultures of learning between their previous and current learning experiences greatly affect how they participate in ESL classes. Parris-Kidd and Barnett (2011) saw international students' classroom participation as a process of negotiating new culture of learning and making conscious and unconscious choices of social, academic and psychological distance. In addition, both Morita (2004) and Yeh (2014) illustrate that students face a major challenge in negotiating competence, identities and power relations, which are necessary for them to participate and to be recognised as legitimate and competent members of their classroom communities. Their studies also present the significance of examining students' narratives and performance in context.

Liu (2002) argues that classroom participation is determined by multiple and interrelated factors. Studies trying to restrict student participation to one or two factors do so at the risk of oversimplifying the examined phenomenon. Liu explores the classroom participation of three Chinese students at an American university and generates a framework of five categories of influencing factors: linguistic, cognitive, affective, pedagogical and sociocultural. This study will apply Liu's (2002) categories of influencing factors as the analytical framework in Chapter Six when analysing and presenting the interrelated and complex factors.

These three strands of research present the major trends regarding units of analysis in the existing literature. Most of the research focuses on individual students or instructors. Few research studies examine the classroom as a place that incorporates all community members' perspectives. A more holistic exploration is needed in combining and contrasting the standpoints of international students, their instructors and their peers.

4.5 Silence of International Students

The silence of international students is one of the main focuses of studies on classroom participation in the Western English-medium classroom (Choi, 2015; Morita, 2004; Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015). There are contradictory views of international students' silence. One group of studies tends to problematise international students' silence and equate silence with nonparticipation (Hsieh, 2007). Silent students are often stereotyped as passive learners or incompetent in critical thinking. Grounded in the assumptions that silence limits students' learning, researchers in this group tend to identify the 'barriers' and 'difficulties' and then suggest corresponding solutions to promote verbal participation (Cheng, 2000; Liu, 2002). However, the other group recognises the interactional functions and pedagogical merits of silence and tries to legitimise it as participatory, emphasising its significant functions in teaching and learning practices (e.g. Morita, 2004; Ollin, 2008; Chanock, 2010).

Among the challenges and difficulties that lead to international students' silence in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms, there is a broad agreement in the literature that language competence and cultural difference are the two main barriers to participation (Zhou et al., 2005). Coming to the L2 mainstream classroom in a UK higher education institution, international students move from learning English to learning *in* English. Previously a separate subject, English becomes the medium to acquire knowledge in different disciplines, interacting with instructors and peers and building their new identities. Without explicit

language instruction in international higher education, language learning and the development of communication skills are assumed to be the logical and automatic consequences of English-medium instruction in different disciplines (Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2012). Through interviews with 10 Chinese students at a Canadian university, Zhou et al. (2005) identify English proficiency as the primary barrier to participation, which is compounded by their unfamiliarity with the target culture and conflicts with their previous learning experiences. There is a prevailing sense of anxiety, frustration and isolation associated with the participants' low levels of participation. Applying interviews, Choi (2015) carries out a case study with two Korean students at an American university to specifically explore reasons for the participants' silence. Both students attribute their silence to limited English proficiency, different classroom mannerisms and cultures. The only difference between these two participants is that one emphasises the issue of lack of content knowledge while the other focuses on the issue of saving face. Both Zhou et al. and Choi are aware of the contextual influences on students' classroom participation, as reflected in their theoretical discussions. However, they reach similar research findings about the significant effects of language, culture and other personal attributes, but no factors related to contextual factors. This might be due to the size of sample, but from a methodological perspective, both of them apply a single research instrument – interviews, which might not be sufficient to explore contextual influences.

Despite international students' silence in class, they express a strong desire to participate (Cheng, 2000; Choi, 2015). The existing literature tends to apply a deterministic point of view to examine students' silence by linking their reticence to cultural differences and English communicative competences (Ha & Li, 2014). Cheng (2000) criticises the exaggeration of the cultural influences and the overgeneralisation of Asian international students as reticent or passive learners. However, Cheng acknowledges the great influence of language proficiency. Contrary to Cheng's findings, Morita (2004) finds that language proficiency does

not determine students' participation, as one of her participants remains silent in a class delivered in the student's native language. Nevertheless, both Cheng and Morita agree on the significant influence of contexts and propose that students' silence should be analysed in the context of the specific situation.

Another recurring theme associated with international students' silence or limited classroom participation is their identity conflicts and sense of inferiority to their peers. For example, through interviews with 50 Korean students at a US university, Kim (2012) shows that participants' silence in class leads to a sense of inferiority to their American peers, which is mainly due to their English proficiency. Kim reports that this phenomenon is especially obvious among the formerly top students back in Korea, who describe not having the communicative competence to participate in class at the same level as they had back in their home universities. This presents students' identity conflicts resulting from language, competence and self-image. Hsieh's (2007) case study of a female Chinese student's experience in American classrooms achieves similar findings to those of Kim. The participant feels ignored and invisible in class because of her silence in group discussions and feels like a "useless person". Hsieh states that Chinese culture plays a role in students' silence, but she also argues that classroom settings and other classroom members disempower the international students. The participant in Hsieh's study is involved in a constant negotiation of power and membership, but she feels isolated and frustrated at being unable to fit in. Hsieh's small-scale case study, looking at only one student, is effective to collect in-depth data about the student's experiences and perspective, but there are weaknesses in terms of reliability, trustworthiness and generalisability.

However, silence could be students' proactive choice as a participation strategy or their way of resisting withdrawal from participation (Liu, 2002). Chanock (2010) argues silence to be a student's right and calls for respect for students' reticence to speak. Acknowledging different cultural understandings of the function of

silence as a face-saving strategy and a sign of respect for authority, Tatar (2005) claims silence as a means of participation through active thinking, attentive listening, notetaking and non-verbal communication gestures. Similar findings are presented in Nakane's (2006) study with 19 Japanese students in Australian university seminars. Silence was used as a proactive choice to maintain their positive image, save face in public and show respect for teachers. Beyond cultural and linguistic influences, there are other reasons to explain international students' silence. Meanwhile, beyond the negative concepts associated with silence, silence also has positive influences on students' learning. Ha and Li (2014), through a case study with four Chinese students at an Australian university, show that instead of being a barrier to speaking, students' silence resulting from a language barrier motivates them to improve and practise English. Silence is described as 'choice, right and resistance' in Ha and Li's study, in which none of the four participants treat silence as problematic, instead perceiving it as their active choice to resist their domestic peers' alienation, to process information at their own pace and to protest their unvalued voices.

Most literature does not regard silence as a form of classroom participation because participation is usually associated with verbal engagement (Hao, 2010). However, silence has multiple meanings and should be examined in its specific context. As discussed above in Section 3.3.3, classroom participation should not be limited to speaking and there is a need for a broader concept of classroom participation. Through its exploration of multiple international students' classroom participation patterns, this study aims to reconstruct silence in intercultural classes and provide relational interpretations of different types of silence in their contexts.

4.6 Summary

This chapter presents the stereotypes and perception of international students as 'Other', influencing factors of their classroom participation and the issue of

silence. Three strands of research have been summarised that are used to study the examined issue by analysing different units: individual students, instructors or the class as a group. Various factors affecting students' classroom participation have been identified through an integrative summary of the existing literature, including language proficiency, pedagogical practice, student-instructor rapport, culture, previous learning experiences and students' characteristics. The prevailing phenomenon of international students' silence has also been discussed. A contested topic in the literature is identified: whether silence should be avoided or legitimised as a form of participation.

The literature review has identified a number of gaps. First, "Adjustment" and "adaptation" are the most commonly used terms in the analysis of international students' classroom experiences overseas. Intercultural classroom encounters are often described as problematic and international students are seen as being deficient in relation to the norms, culture and language of the host country. Confronting various challenges in the new learning environment, international students are supposed to adapt and fit in (Lee & Rice, 2007). The position of international students in a host country being a one-way adjustment is not conducive to developing students' intercultural capabilities and implies the prejudice supporting the superiority of the host country (Marginson, 2013). Grounded in the conceptual framework of communities of practice, this study acknowledges the important role played by more experienced members, namely, home students and instructors. Meanwhile, international students also affect the way that more proficient interlocutors behave. This research examines international students' classroom participation as a multidirectional process by investigating not only international students' lived classroom experience, but also instructors' and institutions' approaches and policies in adapting to the new learning context. Furthermore, this study explores how an academic community and instructors may be transformed as they interact with international students.

Second, the existing research seeks to find out who is responsible or who is to blame for the success or failure of classroom participation, but this study regards it as a continual, interactive and negotiating process. Instead of judging people's behaviours, I look at the class as a community to investigate how everyone involved negotiates their membership and position. Third, many studies focus on one single ethnic group of students and often discuss the examined issue by comparing those students' home culture with the target culture. I include students with diverse backgrounds and treat culture as a socialisation process to explore and compare their experience as unique individuals.

Finally, there is propensity of small-scale studies presenting rather singular perspectives. This study aims to present a range of diverse perspectives: those of international students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, their peers and their instructors. Most current research has taken account of students' voices, but only small numbers of studies include the perspectives of home students and instructors. The internationalisation of universities also exposes home students to a new intercultural environment and instructors to new classroom challenges to deal with diverse learner needs. The development of intercultural pedagogy corresponds with the policy for inclusion and diversity, 'Internationalisation at Home', which is widely recognised in the literature (Crowther et al., 2000). This study attempts to present a holistic view of the examined phenomenon by investigating multiple viewpoints, including international students', peers' and instructors'. Instead of inferring what peers and instructors think based on international students' assumptions, their perceptions of international students are obtained and investigated.

In summary, this thesis aims to bridge the existing gaps by exploring international students' classroom participation as a complex process, which is context-specific and detaching from any deterministic frameworks. An ethnographically-informed case study approach allowed to deconstruct practices observed in the classroom

by listening to the voices of all members of the classroom community.

Chapter 5 Research Methodology

5.1 Overview

This chapter sets out the research methodology and methods applied to address the research questions posed in Chapter One. First, it describes the research design and provides a timeline for the data collection. Next, it introduces the research setting and participants. Then it presents how the data was analysed under the guidance of thematic analysis. Finally, the role of the researcher in this study, trustworthiness and ethical issues are discussed.

5.2 Ethnographically-informed Qualitative Case Study

Working within the interpretivist paradigm, this study applied an ethnographically-informed qualitative case study approach to explore the situated and complex process of classroom participation in intercultural classrooms at a UK university. The philosophical underpinning of interpretivism influences my interpretation of knowledge and facts (Curtis, Mark, & Sam, 2013). Following the nature of qualitative research, this study reflects an interpretivist epistemological stance that recognises the importance of personal experiences and individual perspectives on the examined issue. The interpretivist paradigm relies on "participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell, 2003, p. 8) to understand the subjective world of human experience. Researchers in this paradigm do not seek objective answers but rather to approach the reality through people who own the experiences and people of a particular group or culture (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). This study focused on individual international students' lived classroom experiences, subjective feelings and perspectives to reach a better understanding of their classroom participation.

Because of the exploratory nature of the research questions and the socially and culturally complex context of classroom, this study was informed by the

ethnographic approach as I was immersed in the classroom and social activities of the international students researched (Bryman, 2012). Ethnography is a holistic study of a particular social context through examining "what people say and what people do in a given context and across contexts in order to arrive at a fuller representation of what is going on" (Hornberger, 1994, p. 688). Characterised by the application of twin methods of participant observation and in-depth interviews, ethnographic research is known for one of its most widely cited strengths, in-depth and extensive findings about cultural and human behaviours (Robinson & Schulz, 2009). The ethnographic nature of this study is reflected by the close examinations of the participants' changing perspectives, classroom behaviours and feelings in different cultural contexts and by the way it presented what was going on in the naturally occurring settings with detailed narratives of both the contexts and participants.

However, limited by the time available and the scope of the fieldwork, this is not a traditional ethnography (O'Reilly, 2012). The fieldwork lasted for one academic year. There is debate surrounding the definition of ethnography (Hammersley, 2018) and the necessary duration of ethnographic studies (Suryani, 2013). As a traditional ethnographer, Lutz (1981)distinguishes ethnography from ethnographic studies by emphasising the holistic, interactive and recurring nature of ethnography; he categorises those that are 'narrowly focused', 'previously specified' and 'briefly encountered' studies as ethnographic, such as a case study or a field survey. Zaharlick (1992) argues that one year is a minimum for an ethnographic study as he states that it is necessary for ethnographer to commit to long-term involvement and observation to delve into the participants' beliefs, behaviours and activities. However, Wolcott (1990) claims the feasibility of short-term immersion, terming it "micro-ethnography", because he argues that it is effective to examine a topic from a certain perspective and that the growing tendency toward multiple ethnographic case studies also results in short immersion duration. Hammersley (2006) argues that the duration of a study should

be dependent on the research objectives and purposes. He also shows that it is a recent trend that ethnographers in the field of social sciences, including educational research, mainly concentrate on what is happening in the research context and do not have to stay with the focal subjects for a certain period of time. Rather than following the traditional sense of ethnography, this 'narrowly focused' and 'micro-ethnographic' study was informed by its exploratory nature and process while focusing on the culture of intercultural university classrooms and students' behaviours within this context.

There is a common agreement in the literature that a case study is an effective research strategy in educational research to enhance our understanding of contexts, communities and individuals through capturing the complexity of teaching and learning practices and the contexts surrounding them (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2017; Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013; Yin, 2009). Examining it from an interdisciplinary perspective, Merriam (1998, p. 34) suggests the term "ethnographic case study", which is often employed in educational research focusing on the culture of institutions, particular groups and behaviours. Corresponding to the theoretical framework of 'community of practice', an ethnographically-informed case study is an effective approach for this study to explore the community of the classroom and the behaviours and beliefs of its members, allowing for data analyses on both individual and group levels. Instead of regarding it as the international students' responsibility to adjust or to change, a case study could provide a full picture of how community members interact and adjust to each other. However, Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013) remind new researchers that in order to make constructive use of a case study, it is significant to be critical about the definition, selection and analysis of the case or cases.

Schweisfurth (1999) argues that selectivity is an essential dimension of case studies for researchers, who should consider "what and who to be studied, and the boundaries of each case" (p.333). This study started with choosing

international students as the case unit and intercultural classrooms at a UK university as the context in which to study them. However, the boundary between the case and its context is blurred (Yin, 2009) because a case study will only make sense in its particular context. Following Chong and Graham's (2013, p. 24) "Russian doll approach", this study examines individual international students as micro-level cases within bounded meso- and macro-contextual levels of classrooms and institutions. Chong and Graham suggest that using this nested approach to illustrate the understanding of a micro-level case requires an understanding of the meso- and macro-level contexts in which it is nested. Taking individual students' experiences in different classes as the units of analysis, this study carried out cross-case analysis to explore potential patterns synthesising the commonalities while also maintaining the uniqueness of individual cases. As Cohen and Manion (1991, p.125) state, case studies enable researchers to "probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the case study unit, with a view to establishing generalisations about the wider population to which the unit belongs". A case study is an appropriate choice to provide insights into international students' classroom participation, which is complicated by cultures, pedagogical practices and classroom communities. However, generalisation is not the aim of this study; rather, through multiple in-depth case studies, this study aims to move beyond the micro level to make implications for the macro level and similar contexts.

5.3 Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at a university in the UK, which is hereafter referred to as UK University (UKU, pseudonym), where all the research data were collected. To maintain anonymity, all research locations and participants are referred to by their pseudonyms. UKU is one of the world's top-ranking universities, located in a multicultural city in the UK. Ranked as one of the top 20 largest recruiters of international students for the academic year 2016-17 (UKCISA, 2019), UK

University has more than 8, 000 international students from over 140 countries worldwide among its total of 28, 000 enrolled students. Walking through the campus, multicultural elements can be seen everywhere: multi-lingual posters, different faces, various food as well as diverse languages of conversation. The university is also open to different religious beliefs; prayer rooms are provided to Muslim students while there is also a Christian church organising various activities for both local and international students. The moment you walk onto the campus, you can feel the international atmosphere.

The case study participants were 10 international students from seven different countries studying for master's degrees, as listed in Table 5-1. More detailed information on the participants will be provided in Chapters Six and Seven when I present the findings of the individual cases.

Name	**Age**	**Gender**	**Nationality**	**Department**	**Programme**
Alisa	23	Female	Russia	Department of Business	Finance
Qiang	24	Male	Mainland China	Department of Business	Finance
Mary	27	Female	Mexico	Department of Education	Education
Khanh	26	Female	Vietnam	Department of Education	Education
Qinyi	23	Female	Mainland China	Department of Education	Education
Ahmed	29	Male	Kuwait	Department of Education	Pedagogy
Yaffa	27	Female	Thailand	Department of Education	Pedagogy
Farah	29	Female	Indonesia	Department of Sociology and Social Policy	International Politics
Hon	23	Male	Hong Kong	Department of Sociology and Social Policy	International Politics
Haijun	27	Male	Mainland China	Department of Sociology and Social Policy	International Politics

Table 5-1 Demographic information of focal international students

I am aware that none of the individual students can represent a country or a culture, but culture does have influence on its people's behaviours; otherwise it would be all individual behaviours (Brown & Holloway, 2008). At the beginning of the academic year 2016-2017, newly arrived students were recruited through network and snowball sampling within three departments of the Faculty of Social Sciences: Education, Business, and Sociology and Social Policy. My academic background in social sciences was the main reason for recruiting students with a similar background to help me understand their experiences better. Postgraduate taught students were selected due to the characteristics of their programme. Most postgraduate taught programmes last for one year and are course-orientated, which is suitable for exploring the whole process of the participants' classroom experience. This research started at the very beginning of the semester, aiming to capture the initial stage of feelings and perspectives on classroom participation, which could be most intense among newly arrived students (Morita, 2004).

Sampling

Originally, I applied convenience sampling to recruit potential participants through social media and university student forums, but I did not manage to get any volunteers. Then I changed my strategy to snowball sampling with the use of my network and started recruiting participants on Chinese social media, specifically through WeChat groups, which had a large number of master's students. Four Chinese students from the three different departments were recruited first and the rest of the participants were contacted later when I came to observe these four volunteer participants' classes. After gaining permission from their instructors to observe their classes, I followed them to their courses. The first time when I went to the class, the instructor introduced me as a researcher and made sure no one had any concerns about my observation. I introduced my research briefly and expressed my need for more participants. During the break, a few students volunteered to participate in my research. In the

end, eight more students of different nationalities were selected, but two withdrew after the first interview due to concerns about time commitment. The 10 remaining participants were divided into four groups based on their programmes. Contrasts and comparisons were made among students from different subjects, while participants who had the same classes were grouped together to explore their personal participation and negotiation processes. At the end of the first semester, 12 instructors and 12 peers of the focal students were also interviewed to enrich the data and present the examined phenomena from different perspectives.

The participants recruited for this study were all English-as-foreign-language (EFL) learners, informed by the three-circle Model of World English (as presented in Figure 5-1) developed by Kachru in 1985. It remains one of the most influential models for grouping the spread of English in the world (Mollin, 2006).

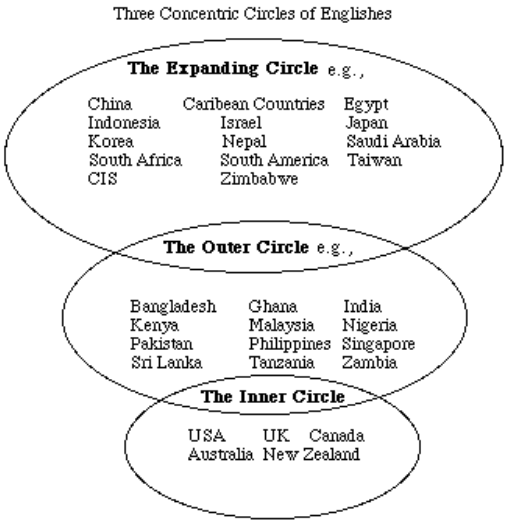

Figure 5-1 Kachru's model of the three concentric circles of English (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008)

The three-circle Model consists of the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle refers to the traditional bases of English, dominated by the mother-tongue varieties, where English acts as a first language

(Mollin, 2006). The countries involved in the Inner Circle include the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The varieties of English used here are said to be 'norm providing' (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008). The Outer Circle consists of countries that were subjected to the earlier phases of the spread of English in non-native settings, where the language has become part of a country's chief institutions and plays an important 'second language' role in a multilingual setting (Rajadurai, 2005). Most of the countries included in the Outer Circle are former colonies of the UK or the USA, such as Malaysia, Singapore, India, Ghana, Kenya and others. The English used in the outer circle is considered 'norm-developing' (Rajadurai, 2005). The Expanding Circle refers to the territories where English is learnt as a foreign language (EFL). The territories do not have a history of colonisation by members of the Inner Circle, nor does English have an institutional or social role. The countries in the Expanding Circle include China, Indonesia, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Greece and Poland.

The participants recruited for this study came mostly from the Expanding Circle: Mainland China, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Russia, Kuwait and Mexico, except Hong Kong, which could be classified as Outer Circle region. However, Hon, the student from Hong Kong, did not go to English-medium school and he learned English as a foreign language. With an EFL background, focal students are understood to have had fewer opportunities to communicate in English before coming to the UK, and this helps to examine the influences of language skills (Kachru, 1992) and to capture how interactions with more experienced 'experts' affect the focal students' classroom participation.

5.4 Data Collection

Using an ethnographically-informed case study approach to explore the target L2 international students' classroom participation, this study applies interviews and classroom observation, complemented by students' reflective journals, as instruments to gather qualitative data. In this section, each of these methods is

discussed in detail, justifying their suitability with reference to literature on educational research methodology and describing their application in the research context.

Bryman (2012) claims that within ethnographic studies, interviews and participant observations complement each other effectively in that observations present the visible phenomenon, while interviews are effective to probe into the details and to clarify the issues that cannot be directly observed. Using interviews and classroom observations to collect the main sources of data, I followed students into different classrooms, observing and interviewing them about their reactions and responses to the classroom practices. Their changing perspectives and feelings at different stages were documented and captured through semi-structured interviews. In addition, the reflective journals kept by the students complemented the interviews to report extra feelings and narrations of their classroom experience. Applying multiple data sources is necessary to achieve a valid and detailed interpretation of the community (McKay, 2006). Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were also arranged with focal students' instructors and peers to obtain their perceptions and viewpoints of the international students' classroom participation. Triangulating the multiple perspectives, I was able to gain a good understanding of the students' classroom experience from different standpoints by cross-checking data from three different sources. Table 5-2 below presents a summary of the data collection methods and database.

Methods	Data Collection Timeline One academic year from Sep 2016-June 2017	Data
Classroom observation	Ongoing during the 1st semester	78 sets of field notes in 8 courses (150 hours of observation)
Spontaneous interviews with students	Ongoing 1-4 times a week	26 emails 9.3 hours audio recordings (face to face or by phone) Transcribed selectively
Informal conversational interviews with students	Ongoing	10.7 hours audio recordings Transcribed selectively
Students' reflective journals	Ongoing	60 written journal reports
Semi-structured interviews with students	Three times: 1st: Beginning of the academic year 2nd: End of semester 1 3rd: End of semester 2	36 interviews, 31.2 hours audio record, Verbatim transcribed
Semi-structured interviews with instructors	Once at the end of the course	-12 interviews -13.5 hours audio recordings -verbatim transcribed
Semi-structured interviews with peers	Once at the end of the course	-12 interviews -15.2 hours audio recordings -verbatim transcribed

Table 5-2 Summary of data collection methods and database

5.4.1 Classroom Observation

One of the main sources of data was classroom observation, which was used to record the classroom dynamics, focal students' classroom performance and instructors' teaching practices. The process of observation is often referred to as fieldwork or naturalistic observation (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) and is used to focus on relevant participants, setting characteristics and behaviours. Observation can

serve exploratory purposes (Hays & Singh, 2012). In addition, the benefits of observational data outlined by Patton (cited in Hays & Singh, 2012) provide a good rationale for the use of classroom observation in this study. First, researchers can better understand the context through observation. Second, instead of relying on participants' descriptions and own imaginations, observation can provide more present and instant moments that are crucial to understand participants' feelings and perspectives. Third, through direct observation, researchers are able to detect some issues that participants are unwilling to mention. Lastly, observation can provide details that participants fail to notice. Immersing myself in the classrooms with the participants enabled me to understand their learning contexts, observe their classroom interactions and identify special moments to explore the process of their negotiation of classroom participation.

The classroom observation was ongoing for the first semester and generated 78 sets of field notes among eight courses over approximately 150 hours. It was mainly in two forms: 1) a group of students taking the same course; 2) different courses taken by the same student. Because it was not realistic to observe all their classes, I took the priority to observe the common courses that the group of students shared. The observation schedule is presented in Appendix Two, which details the observation routine, the information of the courses as well as identifying the focal students and instructors observed. Observing more than one subject in the same class contributed to a comparison of students' behaviours and participation in the same context. Meanwhile, I also tried to observe the classes of individual students as often as I could. Direct observation helped me to design the interview questions and enabled me to contextualise respondents' comments and perspectives captured in the interviews (Morita, 2004). Following the same students to different classes demonstrated how different communities and teaching approaches influenced students' participation.

The observation focused on the participant students' vocal contributions to open

class discussions, interactions with peers, group work and their non-verbal behaviours. The observations were not audio-recorded but an observation form was employed (as shown in Appendix Three), documenting the focus of the classroom practices and the students' performances. A semi-structured observation schedule rather than a systematic one was used since it was deemed more consistent with the qualitative nature of this study. Quantitative data, which was generated by a systematic schedule, such as counting how many times a student talked in class, could not explain the contextual and situated nature of classroom participation. It may also have resulted in overgeneralisation or being restricted to pre-determined themes.

The ongoing class observations for the whole semester revealed the changes in students' performances in class and in their interactions with their instructors and peers. Taking a non-participatory observer mode, I was quiet, sitting in the back without participating in the discussions. Hays and Singh argue that one of the guiding principles for observation is "non-interference on the part of the researcher" to allow for the naturally occurring phenomena (2012, p. 224). However, during the break I chatted to students and instructors. Although these conversations were not recorded, I tried to note down the important information afterwards. I was familiar with most of the students after the whole semester's presence in their classes. Some details observed in the class also served as major interview topics with the students and their instructors. The classroom observations also enabled me to provide thick description of the setting and participants' behaviours in the finding chapters so that readers can fully feel and imagine the students' experiences in great detail.

5.4.2 Interviews

An interview is an effective and practical way of collecting data about opinions and feelings that cannot be easily observed (Bryman, 2012). Treating participants as "co-constructors of knowledge" (Roulston, 2010, p. 224), I employed both

planned semi-structured interviews and spontaneous unstructured interviews to examine *a priori* themes identified from the literature and to explore the themes that emerged from unstructured conversations in immediate contexts (Creswell, 2014). All the interviews were conducted individually on campus and audio recorded. Individual interviews ensured privacy and confidentiality to gain information that participants would otherwise be reluctant to talk in public (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). With the help of audio recording, I was able to engage with participants in the conversation rather than being concerned with forgetting important information or getting distracted from taking notes. Elliott (2012) reminds researchers that taking a note when respondents are speaking might make them distracted or concerned about what they are saying. I usually put the recorder and my mobile phone (used as a back-up device) in a subtle place so that the participants could be more open in sharing their opinions.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the focal students, their teachers and peers at different stages of the study, guided by three different interview schedules (as shown in Appendices Four, Five and Six). The interview schedules were initially developed according to *a priori* themes identified from the literature review and the theoretical framework of this study, and further amended throughout the ongoing study based on classroom observations and participants' responses. In the first few interviews at the early stage of the study, I referred to the interview schedule carefully so that I would not miss any important themes. I usually had the interview schedule in front of me and looked at it now and then. However, I felt it distracted my attention to the interviewees' answers and sometimes caused me to fail to follow up on interesting points. After I realised the issue, I began to follow interviewees' narratives, allowing conversations to proceed in different directions, but with all the themes covered. Forsey (2012) argues that interview questions should be asked naively to put aside the interviewer's prior knowledge and assumptions and thus to yield more valid and reliable data. Questions were open-ended and phrased in plain everyday

language to avoid leading the interviewees in a certain direction and to invite them to share their perspectives and experiences without feeling challenged. Before finishing the interviews, I always asked if there were further things that they would like to add or comment on to allow for time and space for the participants to fully share their experiences and opinions.

Unstructured interviews were only used with the international student participants to explore their feelings and perspectives on specific contexts. Such interviews are effective to gather original and personalised data that the researcher is unaware of and to allow for replies to interviewees' answers (Cohen et al., 2017). The interview questions emerged from the immediate context. The process of interviewing is like a conversation during which the interviewer can build a positive rapport with interviewees. The interviewer can decide when is appropriate to ask a certain question and according to the different characteristics of different respondents, the researcher could use different wordings of questions (Leech, 2002). Emerging from observations and matched to individuals and contexts, informal conversational interviewing therefore increases the salience and relevance of the interview questions (Patton, 1980). Although this type of interview has been criticised for being less systematic and comprehensive, it meets the research aims of this study to provide insights into the negotiating process of individual participants. The following three sub-sections present the conduct of the interviews with different groups of participants in detail.

Interviews with Focal Students

The interviews with the subject international students consisted of three forms: 1) three rounds of planned semi-structured interviews throughout the whole programme, 2) spontaneous unstructured interviews before or after the class, and 3) informal conversational interviews during social activities. The planned semi-structured interviews with focal students involved more than one episode of data collection to explore any micro-level changes (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston,

2013). I conducted semi-structured interviews with focal students at three different phases, around one hour each time, at the beginning of the academic year, at the end of the first semester and at the end of the whole programme. The interviews with Chinese mainland students and Hong Kong student, Qinyi, Qiang, Haijun and Hon were conducted in Mandarin, while the rest with the other seven participants were in English. The initial set of interviews was to investigate their relevant backgrounds, current programs, concerns and expectations. Based on the analysis of the findings from the interviews in the first phase, the second phase further discussed their classroom experiences in terms of their feelings, challenges and strategies. The last phrase was a summary of their experiences of the whole programme regarding changes or transformations in their identity and classroom participation. All these interviews were compared and contrasted to identify students' changing perspectives and feelings about their classroom participations over an extended period of time to uncover their adaptations and transformations (Morita, 2004).

The immediate interviews before or after the classroom observation were rather short, between 15 minutes and half an hour, providing a close examination of focal students' preparations and reviews of their classroom participation and a continuously detailed record of their feelings, which they might forget later. Students' participation and reflections were major indicators for interpreting their negotiation of the participation process. Additionally, their attitudes and emotions were most evident and easy to capture right after the class. There were no fixed questions but the interviews before the class were based around their expectations and preparations for the class, while questions after the class were about their classroom behaviours and interactions with instructors and peers. An examination of focal students' comments on their interactions with their instructors and peers provided rich data about the other community members' roles in the focal students' classroom experience and thus facilitated examination of the theoretical assumptions of 'community of practice' regarding the

importance of 'experts' and 'old-comers'. However, when time was limited or when students did not feel like being interviewed, they would note down their ideas in their reflective journals, email me or talk to me over the phone.

In addition, informal conversations were recorded when I attended social activities and spent casual time with the participants. Because of the exploratory and ethnographically-informed nature of this study, I tried to engage with the participants as much as possible both inside and outside the classroom. The social activities I attended together with the students included catchups for coffee, Christmas parties, end of term gatherings, an English corner and church activities. I built rapport with the participants through these activities and they would usually share some feelings and perspectives about their learning and life experiences. All the conversations happened in their natural course, conducing reliable and situational data and therefore helping me develop an understanding of the culture of the group, their interactions and behaviours within the context.

Interviews with Instructors

Twelve instructors of the participant students were interviewed at the end of the semester after I had finished my observation of their courses, guided by the interview schedule (see Appendix Five). Each interview lasted about one hour, with the shortest being 35 minutes and the longest being two hours. The instructors' perspectives presented their perceptions of classroom participation, their expectations and their interpretations of students' classroom behaviours. As an important source to understand and illustrate students' classroom experiences, their explanations provided insight into the classroom socialisation, interactions, and teaching approaches. The interviews focused on instructors' general impressions and expectations of international students' classroom participation, their understanding of students' difficulties, justification of their teaching design and their own challenges. While some instructors also shared their impressions of individual students in terms of their participation in class, other instructors

refused to comment on individuals due to ethical concerns. In addition, instructors' viewpoints were helpful to investigate mutual understanding between them and students when their perspectives were compared and contrasted with those of international students and their peers, helping me find pedagogical implications.

Interviews with Peers

Twelve of the focal students' peers who had interactions with them were selected and interviewed at the end of the course to present their assumptions, expectations and actual experience of class interactions with the target international students. Due to the limited number of domestic and native English-speaking students, only six of the peers were native English speakers, with three from the UK, one from America and one from South Africa, while the other six were from different countries: China, Thailand, Greece, Azerbaijan, Italy and Indonesia. This interview schedule is presented in Appendix Six. Each interview lasted about one hour. The original aim of the interviews with the peers was to investigate their impressions of the focal participants' classroom participation. However, most peers had little knowledge and few memories of the target international students' participation modes. The interviews then focused more on their general impressions and feelings about international students' classroom participation and how they were affected. All the interviews with peers were transcribed verbatim. However, only the six native English-speaking peers' data are presented in this study because the L2 peers reported similar issues as the focal international students did. It would be repetitive to present the L2 peers' opinions of classroom participation. Treating classroom participation as an interactive process involving all the members of the class community, I investigated the peer students' conceptualisation of classroom participation and their impressions of international students' participation.

5.4.3 Reflective Journals

Reflective journals were employed as a complementary instrument to the observations and interviews to invite international student participants to report their feelings and experiences of classroom participation and events. If there were no spontaneous or informal conversational interviews that week, participants were encouraged to keep a weekly journal. The journals were usually short, ranging from half a page to a page. The three Chinese participants, Qinyi, Qiang and Haijun wrote in Chinese as they preferred, while the rest of participants wrote in English. The reflective journals made it convenient for students who did not have time for interviews to report their immediate reactions and provided thinking time to reflect on their learning practices and classroom behaviours. Some students shared they found it easier to report emotional and sensitive topics through the journal compared with face-to-face interviews. The journals were an important source to learn about the focal students' classroom experience in the second semester when I stopped observing their classes.

5.5 Data Analysis

In keeping with the exploratory nature of the current study, the data analysis is mainly inductive and strongly data driven. Applying the approach of thematic analysis, the whole dataset was coded, looking for emerging and recurring themes. Thematic analysis is a widely applied qualitative data analysis method (Bryman, 2012). It helps researchers navigate their analysis, moving from a broad reading of the data towards discovering patterns and developing themes (G. W. Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Themes are patterns across data sets, important to the description of a phenomenon and associated to a specific research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke claim that thematic analysis is theoretically flexible without being tied to any particular epistemological concerns. It thus provides more flexibility for novice researchers to make a close examination of the data and develop a deeper understanding of the examined issue.

However, Bryman (2012, p.578) warns that although widely employed, thematic analysis, unlike grounded theory or discourse analysis, has no "identifiable heritage" or many available techniques, and he advises that Framework is a general strategy to assist the thematic analysis. Ritchie et al. (2003, p219) describe Framework as 'a matrix-based method for ordering and synthesising data'. This study applied Framework to synthesise different sources of data and present the recurring themes and subthemes (see Appendix Seven). The frameworks for each case were compared and contrasted to present participants' different classroom experiences. In addition, Braun and Clarke (2006) specify six phases to go through during thematic data analysis: "familiarisation with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report" (p. 99). Building on the 'six phases', the current analysis combined a couple of the phases, following four stages: 1) organising and familiarising myself with the data, 2) coding and identifying themes and patterns, 3) reviewing themes and developing emergent hypotheses within and across cases, and 4) producing the final report. Being aware of the non-linear, complicated and cyclical nature of qualitative research (Silverman, 2011), the data analysis of the present study was ongoing throughout the whole project. In the following sections, I discuss each phase in detail.

Organising and Familiarising Myself with the Data

Organising and getting familiar with the data are an ongoing process, even starting from the beginning of data collection (Creswell, 2014). When starting to gather data, I created three separate folders in my computer for the three different departments I was studying. After I had recruited the participants, a separate folder was created for each of them and put into the department folder that they belonged to. Although two students withdrew from the study at an early stage, they agreed the data collected could still be used in the current research. All the data about a given student, including audio-recorded interviews, classroom

observation field notes, emails and reflective journals, were stored in the participant's file and named for the data collecting methods and the date collected. In this way, I could see clearly what data I had for each participant and examine the experiences and feelings of each case individually. At the same time, students in the same department and same programme were grouped in the same file. These students shared at least one class, so those students' different performances and feelings could be compared and contrasted within the same context.

During the fieldwork, I started to transcribe the interviews and organise classroom observation forms to get familiar with the data I had gathered for each participant. All the classroom observation forms were labelled to document any development or changes. Although I planned to finish transcribing all the first phase interviews before conducting those of the second phase, I did not manage to achieve that due to my engagement in the classroom observation and the busy schedule of my interviews. However, I did listen back to the interviews to develop further interview questions and to guide the classroom observations. By the third phase of interviews with the focal international students, I had finished transcribing both previous phases of planned interviews. However, the interviews with their peers and instructors were not all transcribed yet. All the planned interviews with the international students, their instructors and peers were transcribed verbatim. The Chinese participants were interviewed in Mandarin, according to their preference, and I transcribed and analysed those interviews in Mandarin as well. Only when I wrote about each case did I begin to translate the quotes and themes into English to avoid loss of meaning. As for the spontaneous unstructured interviews, I only transcribed the relevant information. Due to the spontaneous nature of the interview, our conversations were not always focused or relevant to this study. The interview transcripts, field notes and students' journals had been reviewed a few times. While organising and reviewing the raw data, I created a summary sheet for each student, listing their demographics, educational and professional

backgrounds, programme information, aims and concerns about their current studies.

Coding and Identifying Themes and Patterns

Charmaz (2002, p. 318) defines coding as "a form of shorthand that distils events and meanings without losing their essential properties". The initial coding was done line-by-line to be open to recurrent codes and emerging themes (see Appendix Eight). It also involved a synthesis of different sources of data from multiple participant perspectives in different research stages, allowing for an analysis which incorporates the changes in student behaviours and inside feelings, as well as peers' and instructors' perceptions. Data collected in the first phase of research - from classroom observations and spontaneous interviews - were closely related and were synthesised. For example, the classroom observation protocol and the spontaneous interview after class, about the same student and on the same date, were coded together to present a connected whole picture of the individual student's classroom experience. Meanwhile, arranged semi-structured interview data collected throughout the three research stages were compared and contrasted to identify any differences of students' classroom participation patterns and the similarities and differences between different community members' perceptions and interpretations of classroom participation. The initial codes were numerous and descriptive. Hays and Singh (2012) advise focusing on thick description of the codes before trying to shorten it. Through open coding, the collected data were broken into meaningful units of analysis, some being as short as words and phrases and others being as long as sentences and even paragraphs.

Themes and patterns were then identified through aggregating the codes. Maxwell and Miller (2008) describe generating themes and patterns as identifying the relationship and structures among codes by connecting and linking them together. Themes were developed from the categorisation of codes based on the frequency,

repetition, connection, similarities and differences among codes (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). The strategy of Framework was applied to assist with organising, synthesising and presenting codes and themes. Multiple frameworks on different themes were developed. The framework, as presented in Appendix Seven for example, was about the theme: influencing factors of classroom participation. Emerging from synthesis of different sources of the research data, the framework was developed and further refined based on Liu's (2002) five categories of influencing factors. While the coding process was mainly inductive, Liu's five categories of provided the structure to synthesise the codes and the language to articulate the themes.

Reviewing Themes and Developing Emergent Narratives within and across Cases

The themes developed were further reviewed to ensure the study's trustworthiness. In addition, beyond their literal meaning, themes were interwoven in order to create in-depth narratives of both the setting and the participants, to build an additional layer of complex analysis (Creswell, 2014). After the development of the main themes, tentative narratives were established about each individual student, for example, the development of their classroom participation patterns and their negotiation of identities in different classroom communities. Through detailed discussion of interconnecting themes and a chronology of events, the narratives were then tested among different sources of data, in specific contexts and then revised accordingly. For example, to make sure the student's performance in course A is typical of their classroom behaviours, one strategy was to test the narrative about the same participant in different courses.

Apart from analysis within the individual cases, themes were also analysed across different cases. After the analysis and presentation of each individual student's case, a comparative study was carried out across cases to examine different

students' experiences in the same context, to identify general patterns emerging from data, and to form complex theme connections (Simons, 2009). As is presented in Chapter Six, cross-case analyses and narratives generated patterns of classroom participation conceptualisations, categories of influencing factors and modes of classroom participation, presenting a whole picture of the prevailing themes and patterns.

Producing the Final Report

Writing and rewriting is an integral part of the interpretation of data; Simons (2009) claims writing itself is the interpretative process. After I had identified categories and themes in the data, I started writing about all the cases by integrating interviews and field notes to create a narrative in story. Marshall and Rossman (1995) argue that writing about qualitative data is crucial to the analysis process, because "in the choice of particular words to summarise and reflect the complexity of the data, the researcher is engaging in the interpretive act, leading shape and form meaning to massive amounts of raw data" (p. 117). During my data collection, I had kept a journal to record some initial thoughts and questions about the participants. The journal documented my impressions and feelings related to some classroom events or conversations with participants. Writing helped me organise my thoughts, test my assumptions and interpret the phenomena. In addition, comparing and contrasting my research findings with the existing studies and theories, I made a further interpretation on how my research findings confirmed or diverged from the previous studies (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Examined within the theoretical lens, the final report had critical discussion of the theoretical concepts that informed the design and conduct of this study while from the practical perspectives, it formed interpretations and implications that called for reform and change.

5.6 Ethical Considerations

Before the fieldwork began, ethics approval was obtained from the College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow. Hays and Singh (2012) argue that it is crucial to justify the benefits and costs of a study for all involved. Detailed ethical issues had been considered and justified, including risks, project details, data collection methods, target participants, confidentiality, data handing and access to data. Plain Language Statements and Informed Consent Forms were also reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee. After gaining approval from the College of Social Sciences, I gained access to observe classes from the heads of three departments to be studied: the Department of Business, the Department of Education and the Department of Sociology and Social Policy. The ethical requirements of the researched university and departments were strictly adhered to.

All the participants were informed that their participation in this study was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason. The Plain Language Statement (see Appendix Eight) was provided to present the research aims, methods and commitment needed, with nothing being hidden from the participants. Three versions of consent forms (see Appendix Nine) were developed because different types of engagement were required from the different groups of participants. All the participants signed the informed consent form and expressed their willingness to participate.

Efforts were made to assure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants and those of the data. While recruiting participants, I anonymised all the personal data and recorded participants' names and contact details in a password protected document in my personal laptop, and I assigned a pseudonym to each participant. The titles of their programmes and courses were also anonymised and referred to by pseudonyms. No real names or personal details appeared in the interview transcripts or field notes. Additionally, data related to the participants' details

were de-identified on all paperwork, whereby the identifiable features were replaced by a code that was password protected.

5.7 The Researcher and the Research

While the qualitative research approach acknowledges the impossibility of absolute objectivity or neutrality, reflexivity promotes the scientific and relatively unbiased study by maintaining a balance of the mutual influences between researcher and the research (Jootun, McGhee, & Marland, 2009). Employing the reflexivity technique, this section reflects and critically evaluates my influences on this study, including research question formation, data collection and analysis and research findings.

First of all, my personal experiences, beliefs and values have unavoidable influences on this study (Silverman, 2011). As discussed in the introduction, my classroom participation experience during my postgraduate exchange study programme in Australia motivated me to research this topic. Although this is an exploratory study based on participants' perspectives, feelings and actual behaviours in class, I have recognised that my own classroom participation experience, educational background and nationality have a great effect on my study's focus, my awareness of the role played by contextual factors and my choice of the conceptual framework of community of practice.

Second, my sense of identity as both an 'insider' and 'outsider' enabled me to immerse myself in the research context to collect data while achieving a detached and relatively objective examination of the target students' classroom participation (McNess, Arthur, & Crossley, 2015). My identity as an international student made me an insider to the focal L2 participants as we all studied away from our home countries and spoke English as an additional language. I developed a friendship with the focal students. They said they felt comfortable and that it was easy to share their feelings and experiences of class with me. At the same

time, as an outsider, I examined the participants' classroom behaviours through the lens the of literature and my research aims, while as a non-participant observer in class, I detached myself from participating in classroom activities and observed quietly from the back of the room. This provided space and time to note down their classroom behaviours. In the interviews, I tried to use neutral words to ask about their opinions and avoided leading them in certain directions.

Finally, there is the possibility that I might influence students' classroom participation patterns and thus the research findings for some cases. Being a senior student to the focal participants, I offered some support and advice to their study and life when they asked for my help. In addition, being observed could have influence on participants' performance. As Khanh told me, talking to me regularly and being observed motivated her to speak up more often in class. She also said, "I feel lucky in taking part in your research and I feel you are my listener. I can complain everything to you and you never make judgement" (Informal chat). However, Qiang, who remained completely silent throughout the whole academic year, expressed little influence from being observed, although he also showed an appreciation of this study. He commented that he got to know a lot of useful resources from me, which facilitated his life to a great extent.

5.8 Trustworthiness of Inquiry

In a qualitative inquiry, trustworthiness, a term coined for research purposes by Lincoln and Guba (1985), refers to the truthfulness of the findings and conclusions as grounded in a reflection of the participants' voices in their context (Hays & Singh, 2012). They provide four concepts to evaluate the quality and rigour of qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These concepts and criteria have been widely applied in qualitative studies to judge their trustworthiness (e.g., Hays & Singh, 2012; Morita, 2004). However, some scholars argue that these concepts are biased as they are just a translation of reliability and validity, the standards applied to quantitative research

(Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). Validation is proposed as an alternative to validity by Angen (2000) to highlight the interactive and contextual nature of qualitative research findings, leaning less in the direction of the deterministic view of validity (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 195). Nevertheless, Tobin and Begley (2004) challenge the search for unified criteria to judge qualitative inquiries and argue that criteria could be changing and relative in different contexts. Being aware of the contested discussion and the absence of unified criteria, I follow Lincoln and Guba's (1985) framework of trustworthiness and discus the criteria and strategies I used to maximise the credibility and value of the present study. The methodological limitations are also discussed as Loh (2013) claims that when establishing trustworthiness, the researcher should not only defend their findings but also reflect on what might be wrong.

Credibility refers to the “believability” of a study (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 200), similar to internal validity in quantitative research. The credibility in this study has been achieved through the use of multiple data collection methods, the involvement of multiple perspectives and interpretation in context. In addition, throughout the process of data collection, I usually checked my tentative interpretations with the participants in our interviews or casual conversations. I have also contacted my respondents for verification of my findings but not all of them replied my emails or social media messages due to their mobility after graduation. Transferability – equal to external validity in quantitative inquiry – reflects to what degree the research findings could be generalised (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Transferability is often considered a limitation of qualitative case studies. This study does not aspire to make generalisations, but the research findings could have implications to other settings that might have a similar student cohort. Thick description and illustration of each case can help others relate these cases to their experience. In addition, having 10 cases from seven different countries allows for the observation of patterns among the participants.

Dependability, referred as reliability in quantitative research, describes the consistency of the research findings and the extent to which they could be replicated over time by different researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Efforts have been made to enhance the dependability of this research as I have provided detailed information about the research context, student cohort, research design and my role within the study. Researchers examining the same topic could relate to my experience and examine whether my research findings are still valid in their contexts. The last concept, confirmability, "refers to the degree to which findings of a study are genuine reflections of the participants investigated" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 201); it is often discussed as objectivity and neutrality in quantitative research. The nature and research design of this study contribute to its confirmability, as it is longitudinal, consisting of one semester of observation, semi-structured interviews in three stages and weekly casual interviews. The focal student participants' views and feelings have been checked and reconfirmed through observing their classroom behaviours and by examining their views at different stages in our weekly interviews and reflective journals.

Chapter 6 Cross-case Study Findings

6.1 Overview

Although case studies are normally applied to achieve an in-depth exploration of a certain phenomenon within a given context, the use of 10 case studies for this research project will help increase the study's potential generalisability by allowing general patterns to be extracted from a cross-case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A series of case studies, through cross-case analysis, can generate patterns and themes that have relevance in many contexts of a similar nature (Simons, 2009). Informed by the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Three, this study's analysis was mainly inductive, developing and constructing patterns based on a synthesis of the data from interview transcripts, classroom observations and reflective journals. In the actual analysis process, individual case analyses were carried out first and cross-case analyses came after. However, here I present my results in reverse, starting with the cross-case findings then examining the individual cases, aiming to present a whole picture of the examined issue and identify the prevailing patterns and influencing factors affecting verbal classroom participation before going into detail about individual cases.

This chapter presents findings across cases, exploring patterns within the experiences and responses of the international students as well as those of their instructors and peers, who played an important role in shaping the focal international students' classroom participation patterns. The perceptions of classroom participation from three different perspectives, the verbal participation patterns of focal students, and the common factors influencing their participation in the new learning context will all be described. I have attempted to reach a general understanding of the participants' classroom participation across cases without compromising any individual case's uniqueness. In the following two chapters, five individual cases are examined within the context of the salient themes that they speak to, preserving the uniqueness of each case in

its specific context. While each of them exemplifies some of the patterns extracted from the empirical data, every participant's case is unique in their negotiating processes. In order to provide the reader with some background information on the participants, their pseudonyms and basic information are presented on the next page in Table 6-1.

6.2 Perceptions of Classroom Participation

Classroom participation is a complicated practice and there is not a unified definition of it in the literature, as discussed in Chapter Three. Different educational experiences, socio-cultural backgrounds, as well as various personal and contextual factors all have significant influence on the participants' perceptions of this concept. It was clear from the answers of the respondents that the focal international students, their peers and instructors had distinctive understandings of classroom participation; they expressed different focuses and expectations regarding classroom interactions. These different perspectives reflected their beliefs, values and attitudes towards classroom participation. Additionally, the research findings revealed conflicts of different perceptions as well as misinterpretations of others' classroom behaviours, which affected the participants' integration in the course and their participation patterns. In some extreme cases, the participants blamed each other for the inactive atmosphere or learning inefficiency, and tension existed in some contexts. The following three sub-sections present the international students' experiences and impressions, together with insights from their peers and instructors, to show how their performance was perceived.

Students	Mary	Khanh	Qinyi	Farah	Ahmed	Haijun	Hon	Yaffa	Alisa	Qiang
Program of study	Educational studies	Educational studies	Educational studies	International politics	Pedagogy	International politics	International politics	Pedagogy	Finance	Finance
Age	27	26	23	29	29	27	23	27	23	24
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female	Male
Nationality	Mexico	Vietnam	Mainland China	Indonesia	Kuwait	Mainland China	Hong Kong	Thailand	Russia	Mainland China
First Language	Spanish	Vietnamese	Mandarin	Indonesian	Arabic & English	Mandarin	Cantonese	Thai	Russian	Mandarin
Educational background	BA in Psychology	BA in Accounting	BA in English Teaching	BA in Media	BA in English Translation	BA in Media	BA in English	BA in English	BA in Accounting	BA in Accounting
Professional experience	Teaching Children with special needs (3 years)	Summer camp organiser and translator (4 years)	None	Radio station manager (7 years)	Translator (3 years)	Documentary editor (3 years)	None	Private English tutor (1 year)	None	Bank staff (1 year)
Classroom participation modes	Reactive participation				Total integration	Conditional participation		Marginal participation		Silent observation

Table 6-1 Basic information of the participants

6.2.1 The Voices of International Students

The international students expressed different perceptions and attitudes towards oral classroom participation, and they kept developing their understanding throughout the whole study. Their beliefs and values of verbal participation determined their classroom behaviours as well as their interpretations of their peers' and instructors' practices. Examining international students' conceptualisation of classroom participation in a developing view, this section presents the participants' understanding and attitudes towards oral classroom participation over time and reports their impressions and interpretations of their peers' participation patterns.

International Students' Perceptions of Classroom Participation

The international student participants defined their understanding of classroom participation according to its functions, benefits and actual process. On the functional level, Mary defined oral classroom participation as "making comments, sharing opinions and seeking for explanations and clarifications". Qinyi regarded classroom participation as a way of processing knowledge and a process of improvement:

> "After you heard what the instructor said, you thought further and raised questions, or you could also discuss questions you got from reading materials. It's a process of improving" (Interview 2)[6].

Hon regarded class as a great platform for sharing opinions. Both Yaffa and Mary regarded verbal contribution as their responsibility when the teaching content was related to their countries. For example, when the subject was about Thailand,

[6] The interviews with Chinese students were conducted in Mandarin. The quotes were translated from Mandarin to English by the researcher.

where Yaffa was from, she felt:

> "I am the Thai student and in the textbook samples the teacher gave us, it has a lot of samples from Thai users, so it was my duty to explain to my classmates" (Interview 2).

Khanh equated verbal participation in class with engagement and she treated asking questions in class as a way of showing that she was "paying attention to the class" (Interview 1). In addition, Khanh differentiated between small group and whole class participation. She treated small group participation as "cooperation" and "mutual responsibility" (Interview 2), while whole class or large group participation as a chance to ask questions and clarify thoughts.

The benefits of oral classroom participation were widely recognised by the participants and were summarised as: 1) a means of acquiring knowledge; 2) intercultural communication; 3) showing engagement; 4) improving English speaking skills; 5) providing the instructor with feedback. For example, Mary attributed great importance to oral participation in class because she treated it as an opportunity to gain knowledge and to share different perspectives of education from different countries. Similarly, Khanh thought classroom participation was very important for her studies because "I am afraid I will miss the information and I can talk with my peers and tell them my concerns" (Interview 1). Farah thought class discussion activities could "force the students to study and to read more" (Interview 3).

Changes in their attitudes occurred as the semester went on. A common pattern observed in the students' attitudes towards oral classroom participation was that they were impressed by the interactive delivery mode in the beginning, recognising the significance of participating in the classroom activities. However, as time passed, four different categories regarding students' attitude development were identified: 1) They valued the importance of oral participation and kept forcing themselves to participate; 2) They valued the importance but

participated only when they felt comfortable; 3) They valued the importance and forced themselves at the beginning but became more critical of it as time passed by; 4) They valued the importance in the beginning but became indifferent to it later.

The first category represents participants who always valued the significance of classroom participation and forced themselves to speak up during classroom activities. For example, Farah was worried that she might not keep up with the discussion content if she did not say anything in the class: "I have to say something. Otherwise, people are going to say something, and I am going to be the one who doesn't understand what they are talking about" (Interview 2). She was also concerned about teachers' feelings, stating that:

> "I prepare myself with questions because I feel bad when teachers ask questions, and no one raises their hands. I feel like if you are a teacher and how would you feel if you ask a question and no one answer your questions or at least say something" (Farah, Interview 2).

Farah was very excited to tell me one day after her class, "The first two weeks of the class I found it very hard to follow the discussion. But yesterday I said something in the class. For me, it's an improvement" (Interview 1). In her weekly reflective journal, she also wrote, "I feel relief and confident after speaking up in class". Sometimes, this category of students cared more about speaking up in class than the meaning of the content; even a "dumb" question or some random comments would make them feel good or secure. Khanh said:

> "I was telling myself that at least I have to say something in the classroom. […] I regret if I didn't ask. I think it will be easier if I asked. Even though it's some stupid questions, I think if I asked then I would save a lot of time not to read the material" (Interview 1).

Khanh always valued the importance of verbal participation and made great efforts to speak up in class. At the beginning of her studies, she thought her verbal participation was mainly for her own benefit and she worried about whether the

quiet students would find her too talkative. However, as time passed, she became more passionate about speaking up in class and started appreciating her own and other students' verbal engagement because she thought:

> "It makes the lesson less boring. Because it will be very, the atmosphere is very dull and slow as if in a show room and just one person who's the tutor keeps talking all the time. I think at least when I raise one question, somehow it will be beneficial to other students because they may have the same concern as me" (Interview 2).

In contrast, the second category of students did not force themselves to speak up in class and instead they only participated verbally when they felt ready and comfortable. They valued the significance of classroom participation, but they viewed participation as something that should occur naturally. For example, Ahmed reflected:

> "I only participate when I know what I am talking about. If I am not sure about my answer, I will not. I think it depends on if there was a task or reading or something that needs to be discussed in class. I think participations in some classes are essential and in some classes, they don't make sense".

Holding similar opinions, Mary's attitude to classroom participation was quite stable throughout the whole academic year: she attempted to contribute to the discussion, but only when she felt comfortable and ready.

Those participants in the third category were more critical of the necessity of verbal participation, as well as the content and the quality of the questions and answers in different circumstances. They valued the importance of classroom participation throughout the year, but they only participated when they thought their answers could contribute to the discussion or provide some original perspectives. Qinyi was extremely passionate about speaking up in class at the beginning of her studies. She insisted on speaking in English in group discussions even when she was with Chinese students. She also chose to use English in our first interview. Qinyi stated that she tried to force herself to participate at the

beginning of the study, even when she felt uneasy. She preferred to sit with native English-speaking peers in the first semester and she told me she always reflected on her responses afterwards, including grammatical and vocabulary mistakes. However, as time went by, she became more critical of oral classroom participation. At the end of the academic year, in her third interview, she commented, “For now, regarding speaking up in class, it happens more naturally and spontaneously. If I feel I have an answer to a question, I will respond to it. I stop thinking about it after I answer it, unlike before”. Additionally, when I asked her about her current attitude to classroom participation, she was more critical: “It depends on what questions are asked or what answers are given. I hate the meaningless and dump questions that interrupt the flow of the classroom and waste time (Interview 3).

Students in the fourth category appreciated the benefits and importance of verbal participation at the beginning of the study when they were still impressed by the interactive class mode. However, as their studies went on, they lost interest in speaking up in class. Qiang recognised the benefits of interactive course delivery modes. Nevertheless, he lost his motivation to speak up quickly when he found that “discussions in class did not help my further understanding of the teaching subject” (Interview 1). Instead, he felt that “reading and thinking on my own enabled me to achieve a deeper understanding of the teaching content” (Interview 1). Sometimes he asked lecturers questions during the class break, but he stopped making efforts to speak up in class.

Interpretations of Peers’ Participation Patterns

Thinking about their native English-speaking peers, the focal international students had different interpretations of their verbal participation patterns and developed complex feelings. On the one hand, some students criticised their peers’ dominant participation modes and found them intimidating due to their fluency and eloquence in English. Some participants also criticised their peers for simple

questions they asked to the whole class without consideration of the class flow or taking up others' time. On the other hand, other students appreciated the importance of their verbal contributions to class activities and recognised their critical thinking abilities. The different comments and feelings were captured in different courses and with different groups of students. For example, Mary found her native English-speaking peers' participation to be dominant and intimidating in one course due to her concerns about her language proficiency:

> "They have very strong opinions and sometimes they ended up talking among themselves. Because maybe you don't have the same level of vocabulary, even if they understand you, sometimes I feel that I am not expressing myself that well, because I cannot find that word in English" (Mary, Interview 2).

Farah echoed a similar idea when she reported that she felt challenged by her native English-speaking peers' competent use of language at the beginning of her study, but she was not impressed regarding the quality of her peers' questions as she stated:

> "I feel a bit intimidated but it's not about what they say. It's just about their English is so fluent you know. So, it's easier for them to raise their hand and ask the teacher questions. And then they speak, speak, speak" (Interview 1).

However, in the third interview, when Farah had accumulated more classroom experience with more peers, she expressed her admiration of some of her classmates' broad knowledge, which motivated her to read more. She commented, "I feel like how they can have the knowledge; I feel like I have to read more about that topic. So, it pushed me to study a bit harder I think, to read more" (Interview 3). She often compared her own participation to her peers' and tried to learn from them:

> "I feel like when the teachers asked about something and they raised a topic and other students can ask him or her back while I cannot. So, I feel like I have to do more" (Interview 3).

Farah's attitude towards her peers changed from intimidation to admiration and

a desire to make efforts to learn from them. However, Qinyi's opinion of her verbally active peers moved in the opposite direction. At the beginning of her studies, Qinyi admired those students who were active in class and respected their courage to speak up in front of the whole class. Nevertheless, she was more critical of the meaning of their contributions and she also criticised their inadequate consideration of their questions:

> "I just feel they are brave. They can say whatever they want. They aren't afraid of making mistakes. I think other students, some of the questions are a bit dumb but at least they have the courage to ask, so I just hope I can have the kind of courage they have" (Interview 2).

Qinyi's comments demonstrate her complex feelings about her peers' participation. She wanted to be like them, to talk freely in class, but she was also very conscious of the quality of their interactions. Similarly, Khanh appreciated the active participation modes of her native English-speaking peers' questions in class and felt motivated by their active participation. However, sometimes she thought their questions were not of importance or were even unnecessary: "It encourages me to speak more, but sometimes I feel like Western people speak all the time. But sometimes I also feel they ask very easy questions" (Khanh, Interview 1).

In contrast, Ahmed showed understanding of the "talkative" native English-speaking students and he sympathised with their consideration for other students in the class:

> "Sometimes they had to start talking or participating because the class was too quiet. An American girl in one course always participated. Sometimes she had to stop participating or be quiet in some lectures or seminars because you know she knows that she participates a lot and nobody else. Sometimes, she would like to stop talking and let the rest of the class discuss the lectures or topics" (Interview 3).

Being one of the most active students within one of his courses, Ahmed said he understood how the active students felt because he was in similar situations

sometimes when most of his peers stayed quiet in class.

In summary, the focal international student participants were impressed by the form of their peers' verbal participation but not always the content. They expressed their admiration of their peers' English proficiency, courage and critical attitude. Meanwhile, some of them also felt intimidated by these merits that they admired and critiqued the quality of their classmates' contributions. Additionally, other students expressed sympathy for their active peers and appreciation of their consideration. The various opinions summarised in this section were based on the participants' experiences in different courses and among different groups of students. Further discussions in specific contexts with individual cases will be made in the following two chapters.

6.2.2 The Voices of Native English-Speaking Peers

Compared to the focal participants' opinions, their NES peers attributed greater significance to oral participation in classroom activities, viewing discussion and other forms of oral classroom activities as an essential part of the learning process. For example, two of the respondents emphasised that verbal participation facilitated knowledge processing:

> "I think that articulating your ideas aloud and having someone's responses to them is one of the ways that it really gets into your head. I think that is an important part in your learning process, definitely" (Brenda).

> "The participation part of the seminar is when the information really sticks in your head because you are going into the ideas, understanding and discussing. Otherwise, it's just some lecturer or teachers speaking at you rather than you are becoming involved" (Tracy).

The value that the native English-speaking peers assigned to oral classroom participation had a great influence on their attitudes towards and expectations of international students' classroom participation. A common observation reported by the native English-speaking peers was that international students were silent

and inactive in the classroom. Tracy found the international students reserved and she also complained about their limited participation. Natalie reported a similar issue:

> "I did feel there is kind of reservation or shyness, just about saying their opinions. When the tutor asked us whether we would like to share our thoughts, a lot of the time they didn't want to. They'd kind of look at me and be like, you know, you can say something".

Regarding the silence and limited classroom participation of some of the international students, the native English-speaking peers expressed different attitudes and described different interaction patterns with international students. One group of students felt frustrated with the inactive participation of international students even though they sympathised with their potential learning difficulties. This group of peers equated international students' inactive participation with insufficient background knowledge or lack of preparation. Tracy and Natalie sympathised with their difficulties, but they argued that the inactive verbal participation was directly connected with international students' insufficient background knowledge of the subject, which affected their understanding and participation in subsequent discussions. The two quotes below from Tracy and Natalie reflect their perspectives:

> "I felt sorry for the international students because some parts of the course, particularly with Sociology, you need to know about British history before you can grasp the ideas and a lot of people I don't think were prepared for the discussions because you need to know these things. And of course, being British, you grow up, you know these things. But coming from another country, it must be so difficult, the history and the language, everything" (Tracy).

> "I mean it is very obvious that they don't really have as much knowledge in the field of Education. I think it is, I think maybe that is a part of, that's why it is always the same kind of people who participate. So, it is always like the four who have kind of background knowledge, so it is easier to answer" (Natalie).

Some of them were concerned that the presence of international students might

affect the depth of the teaching content, the teaching methods and the language used by the tutors. They also complained about having nobody with whom they could discuss things in more depth.

> "I mean I completely understand that it's not their native language and for a lot of students here, she spoke at quite a slow pace. I was a bit frustrated. This is a master's level. The general course, I found it was too slow for me. She would explain terms which you know if you have a background in Education" (Natalie).

> "I feel like we could have gone deeper into things. What I did in the time I had, I read a lot of articles. I read a lot more than I have to, just so that I got the most, just take what I can from the course. The rest I just do on my own. I have been reading a lot of the things she posted but I don't really have anyone to discuss with" (Taylor).

> "I just do my own thing then. So that discourages teacher-student interaction, which is really the main thing that I found frustrating is that I have no reason to interact with. They are not guiding me with anything really. They are pushing me to teach myself" (Claire).

In one of the extreme cases, Tracy dropped the course due to the large number of international students in the course and their limited oral participation in class discussions. More details are presented in the case of Haijun in Chapter Eight.

Another group of peers had great empathy for international students' experiences and did not mind their silence or inactive participation, but rather tried hard to support them. Brenda reflected on her experience abroad and sympathised with international students' feelings and situation:

> "I don't want to sound patronise but I didn't want them to feel like, yeah, kind of not included. I didn't like the way that the sort of British students sat together, and they didn't want to talk to the Chinese students. I lived abroad before. Maybe I am just aware of how sort of isolated you can be in another country. I wouldn't like it if I was at university in another country and I felt that the students from that country didn't like interacting with me" (Brenda).

A common theme extracted from this group of peers was their role as a teacher

within group discussions. Kate said:

> "Everyone deserves help from other people in the class and explaining something to somebody else is always a better way sort of forming your ideas about it anyway. For me, it is quite nice".

Nevertheless, she was also worried that her efforts to manage her group and make everyone talk might seem patronising to the international students:

> "I am worried a little bit sometimes. I try to manage the tasks and to make sure everyone is talking, make sure such and such so that we work as a group a little bit. And that wasn't really my job. It could come across as being patronising".

Similarly, Brenda was happy to help her peers but was also worried about how her presence in the group might influence their participation:

> "But when I was at the table and doing the group activities, it sometimes turned into a little bit like I was kind of the teacher. Obviously, I was happy to help but it was a bit, I felt like maybe I was kind of undermining their own thoughts. I felt like maybe they felt less confident saying what they thought because they knew that I kind of knew the material better or have the background to do the activity a bit easier. So sometimes that was kind of a strange dynamic" (Brenda).

However, according to my interviews with international students, they often appreciated their peers' efforts to include them in group discussions and they commented that sometimes their peers helped them achieve a better understanding of the subject, and that exchanging ideas and experiences also complemented the lecture. They also expressed that having caring peers in their group would motivate them to talk more.

International students' opinions were also treated as a source of knowledge. Brenda appreciated the information she learned from her Chinese peers, which she could not read in journals or news articles.

> "Sometimes it was really cool speaking to people because they were telling me the way media works in China, for example, and that was really interesting because I just didn't know anything about that" (Brenda).

Even those in the category of students who felt frustrated with international students' inactive participation appreciated the perspectives that international students brought to the class. Tracy often complained about the silence of international students, but she was very interested in their opinions when they shared examples from different countries:

> "When they bring in examples of their own countries that we would never know about, it's very, very interesting. They could give us the real insights because we only get the literature to rely on. That's brilliant because you would not get that just from the textbooks. It can really enrich the debate" (Tracy).

A few of the peers expressed their desire that the international students talk more as they were interested in learning about what happened in other countries as well as hearing ideas from different perspectives.

On the other hand, contrary to the focal international students' impression of their native English-speaking peers being dominant without considering others in the class, their peers all expressed their self-consciousness at speaking up too much. Some of them worried that they might take over the discussion without giving other students a chance:

> "I had to be careful not to take over. Very often when we discuss something, they rarely could answer the questions. I often wait and be like, just give them a chance because a lot of the time I find that when it's always the same students participating, they don't actually realise they don't even give other students a chance to participate. That's why sometimes I just wait and see if someone else would say something instead of immediately putting up my hand" (Natalie).

Some were concerned that their presence in the group might make the students uncomfortable or be seen as "undermining their thoughts". However, while some

participants realised they were being dominant in class, they felt both sorry for the quiet students but also felt frustrated at not being able to carry on a discussion in class.

> "Because they were so quiet, I found I was speaking all the time and then it becomes your own private lesson. It's not fair for other people and then you think, 'Should I speak? Because I just spoke.' And then you tend to be more quiet than you would be. I was just terrible really" (Tracy).

Some of the verbally active peers who felt frustrated with international students' verbal participation found themselves on the horns of a dilemma. They valued the importance of speaking up in class and viewed it as a critical part of classroom learning practice. They were eager to share ideas and expected in-depth discussions, but they found it difficult to communicate with some of their peers. As for the group of peers who could accept the silence of international students, they felt okay with international students' occasional verbal contributions and did not perceive any negative influence on their learning.

6.2.3 The Voices of the Instructors

Instructors' Perceptions of Classroom Participation

Most instructors would expect verbal participation from their students, and they valued it as an important part of the students' learning process. They widely recognised the benefits of oral classroom participation. A few benefits cited in the interviews were: 1) increasing engagement; 2) benefitting other students by posing questions; 3) improving communicative competence; 4) promoting the class process. Grace understood verbal participation as "engagement", showing that "they are able to understand, communicate and collaborate". Achilles reflected on his experience: "When a student asks something, 99%, there are other students in the room who have the same question, but they are afraid or shy to ask it". He always encouraged students to ask questions in class so that other students would also benefit. Considering classroom participation as something that helps students

develop a useful skill, Martina stated, “The world often judges you by your ability to verbally communicate. I think it's very powerful. I think you can also [use it to] manipulate”. Martina also argued that students should develop communicative skills starting from classroom, discussing from a practical point of view.

However, while most instructors recognised the benefits of oral classroom participation, some of them were also aware that verbal participation was not the only way that students could participate, and that nonverbal attentiveness was a learning indicator as well.

> “I think oral participation is important. I don't think it's the only way, but I think it's certainly important. It's not always about discussion. It might be about illustrations; it may be about drawing diagrams; it might be about, you know, other ways of actually showing somebody that you have engaged with big ideas other than always having to be verbal” (Martina).

Meanwhile, some of the instructors were critical of the quality of students’ discussions. Sarah argued that at the master’s level, students should dig into certain issues, articulate and communicate their thoughts, but those thoughts should be based on literature or other materials rather than just consisting of “my opinion” and some random thoughts. Some instructors even considered oral participation to be a “deficit model” to tell whether students are engaging in class, as Sandie suggested when she said she found it “superficial” to judge students’ engagement in class by their verbal behaviours. She thought some questions were actually not relevant to the teaching content and she echoed Martina’s opinion that sometimes “silent attentiveness” was more valuable than random oral participation. Moreover, Achillies regarded silence as normal from intercultural perspective because he realised that a lot of international students kept quiet in class back in their home countries: “I perceive these [behaviours] are something expected, not that they are careless, or they are not interested in the class. That is the way that they are used to”. In addition, some instructors commented that students’ verbal participation did not correspond to their understanding of the subject or the grades of their assignments. Martina shared that some silent

students demonstrated “extraordinary understanding” of the subject while some very talkative students submitted very weak essays: “Their thoughts in class don’t all translate into what they write about”.

Instructors’ perceptions and expectations of classroom participation are also closely related to their teaching styles and the nature of the subject, which in turn affect students’ classroom participation patterns. As for the lecturers who applied teacher-orientated approach, they expected less verbal participation but more mental engagement within their classes. For example, lecturer Achilles delivering lectures in finance among about 200 students only expected verbal participation from some students to pose representative questions for the whole class. By contrast, for those applying learner-centred approach, they tended to take the role of a facilitator or conversationalist and thus would expect active verbal engagement from students. Khalid, a seminar tutor for 20 students, who identified himself as a facilitator to promote students’ interactions and discussions of topics, always made extra efforts to get every student to contribute verbally to the discussion.

Interpretations of International Students’ Classroom Participation

Most instructors found that non-native English-speaking international students tend to be quiet in class, but they sympathised with the potential difficulties they underwent. Achilles reported that international students in his class did not participate much and he tried to motivate them to interact, but he felt they could have been more active, especially as they did have questions in class, which they came to ask him individually.

> “It could be better. I find that students are shy on average, so you asked them whether you have a question, they don't give the question and when you have the break, then they come and ask the question, which doesn't help interactions. So, they are interested in the course, but they don't participate a lot, I think” (Achilles).

Achilles compared international students' and domestic students' different ways of asking questions: "The difference is that the national students wouldn't come to ask questions during the break. They would ask some questions during the class, which helps the interaction flow" (Achilles). Anna described her impression of international students' different learning patterns: "There was a suspicion to receive message rather than try this class and then engage in the discussion". Sandie echoed Anna's opinion; she thought that they had different expectations of learning from those of international students:

> "Particularly the Asian or East Asian students, they have more of a knowledge-based system before they came: a lot of demonstrating what they know. But as soon as they come and start this master's programme, our focus is very different. It's expecting people to be able to get information and to know things. We have a bigger priority thinking about what they are reading and analysing it and having discussion, so a lot of critical thinking is required".

However, Sandie expressed different opinions from Anna. She thought international students participated well when they were clear about what they were asked to do and she said she was always impressed by the way that international students managed to participate: "As soon as they realise what they need to do, they make a big effort".

Instructors' Challenges in Intercultural Classrooms

The instructors reported that the new situation of intercultural classrooms was challenging for them too. Although the internationalisation of higher education has been developing for decades, instructors found they came across different situations every year, which they found challenging. As Martina said, "It is a new situation and you realise the way you did something last year maybe's not going to be the best way to do it this year". Among the three different departments and four subjects observed, three common challenges were identified: 1) difficulty motivating interactions; 2) the dominance of a single nationality (Chinese) in the student cohort; 3) balancing students' different learning needs. Achilles found it

difficult to motivate his students to talk more in class, and he thought, "I need to find the formula of making the students more interactive, to engage more [laughs]. I don't know what I could do to make them engage more". Although China has been the biggest contributor of international students in the UK for a few years, the instructors commented that this was the first year that they had had such a big percentage of Chinese students within class (Martina, Christine, and Sandie). They reported that the dominance of one single nationality among the students posed challenges for them when it came to deliver the class and facilitating discussions and interactions. They found it difficult to mix up the students and they said it was "unhealthy" for both Chinese and non-Chinese students, each of whom would enjoy a more complete intercultural experience if they were in a more diverse student cohort.

Instructors found it difficult to arrange classroom activities and to deliver the teaching content while being aware of students' different language proficiencies, experiences and socio-cultural and educational backgrounds. Martina felt that it was a challenge to find a balance that could meet both native English-speakers' and international students' learning needs:

> "You're constantly trying to say, I need to make sure the native English-speaking students are being challenged appropriately but I also need to make sure I'm not so busy challenging them that the others […] are left out of what I'm talking about" (Martina).

Sarah shared similar concerns that the teaching content might not be deep enough for one group of students while being too challenging for the other groups:

> "With the master's courses I have been very torn and very conflicted. I would love to sit in on other master's courses and see how other people are teaching a mixed group of national and international students" (Sarah).

However, all the instructors disagreed with native English-speaking students' complaints about "dumbing down teaching content". They argued that the teaching content had been set before they met the students. For example, Martina

argued:

> “I didn't lower the level of the content. I may have changed the language I used. I couldn't lower the level of the content because the level of the content is set to the criteria and standard of being the level of this course for the 20 credits, so I couldn't, in a sense, water down the content, [but] I do think I might modify my language a little. Maybe occasionally we spend longer looking at something, and we might have. Having said that, I would be guided by learners and that's what the learners in class needed and that's what I would do”.

Grace echoed similar opinions: “I don't think things need to be dumbed down at all”. However, she added that she did adjust her way of delivering the course: “I think we need to give them more thinking time, more time to process information translating in their brain”.

In addition, there were subject-specific challenges presented by the large class sizes, particular in the Department of Business and the subject of Education in the Department of Education. One course in the Department of Business had more than 300 students. With such a large number of students sitting in a lecture hall, students could hardly see the lecturer and Achilles complained, “such a large number of students doesn't help interactions”. The subject of Education had around 100 students facing similar challenges. In contrast, the subjects of Pedagogy and International Politics had around 30 and 20 students respectively. One obvious difference observed in these classrooms was that lecturers knew students’ names and students also knew each other, which facilitated student-student and student-teacher interactions.

This section has presented a detailed description of the perceptions of oral classroom participation from three different perspectives: non-native English-speaking international students, their native English-speaking peers and their instructors, showing the three entities’ common views and conflicts, sympathies and complaints. Regarding their common views, there was a wide recognition of the benefits of verbal participation, such as increasing engagement, promoting

discussion, improving communicative competence and offering intercultural experiences. They all considered oral participation beneficial and positive for the class, although to different standards and with distinct expectations. Both the native English-speaking students and instructors expressed great sympathy with international students regarding their potential learning difficulties. However, they shared complicated feelings towards what was actually happening in the class. There existed tensions and conflicts in the new learning environment, which mainly resulted from different expectations of teaching content, verbal participation patterns and student cohorts.

While some native English-speaking peers appreciated the knowledge and experiences that international students brought to the classroom, others felt frustrated about the depth of discussion, the silence of international students and the dominance of one single nationality within the classroom. However, the course convenors and instructors clearly denied the native English-speaking peers' complaints about the over-simplification of teaching content. They would teach the same content for native English-speaking students, although they adjusted their teaching style and graded their language by speaking more clearly and slowly and explaining some terms that they thought the international students would not know. Some instructors did recognise national students' concerns about the depth of discussion, while others argued that the best way to learn was to teach, stating that the native English-speaking students would benefit from reaffirming their knowledge. Finally, in terms of the dominance of one nationality in class (Chinese), there were complaints from all three perspectives that the institution should pay more attention. The peers complained about having too many Chinese students within the class. A few issues were reported, such as their tendency to sit together and speak in Mandarin even in group activities, which affected interactions. The instructors complained that it was difficult to organise group activities while making sure each group was composed of students with diverse backgrounds. However, the Chinese complained more than the native English-speakers about the incomplete intercultural experience. They came here for a different

experience, but when they found that they were with the same people as back home, they felt discouraged from reaching out to participate more.

6.3 Classroom Participation Patterns

It was evident that the focal international students' attitudes towards classroom participation were closely related to their efforts and performances within their classes, although there was not an absolute positive relationship due to contextual and individual factors. This section categorises the classroom participation patterns of the 10 focal international students and presents their experiences and feelings in different courses. Being aware of the different definitions and focuses of "classroom participation", the present study looks at the participants' verbal engagement and interactions in the classroom. The four classroom participation modes conceptualised by Liu (2002, 53) - "total integration, conditional participation, marginal interaction and silent observation" – are applied as an analytical framework to describe the participants' experiences and feelings in the classroom. Liu (2002) describes total integration as the most active participation mode, through which international students can keep up with the class flow and participate in discussions spontaneously and naturally. Students in this pattern have a good knowledge of what is expected from the target classroom conventions and culture. Conditional participation describes the group of students who still struggle to find the right moment and space to speak up in class. They are usually motivated to participate but their participation is limited due to sociocultural, cognitive, affective, linguistic or contextual factors. Marginal interaction is a less frequent participation mode than conditional participation. These students seldom speak up in class, although they listen attentively. They dare not take risks and their answers or participation often result from an "internal rehearsal" and from organising language in their mind. The last category is silent observation, which refers to those students who are never verbally engaged but who may be mentally active while just keeping reticent in class. Some of them may also experience difficulty understanding the teaching content or discussion topics.

However, these four categories are not sufficient to explain all students' experiences. Liu's model explains the group of students whose participation patterns remained the same throughout the semester, but some students were reactive participators who negotiated different participation patterns in different courses. There is no clear-cut category which these students could be said to belong to. Instead of putting them into the four categories, Liu's categories are applied in the present study to describe their participation patterns at a certain stage in a certain course. Informed by Liu's concepts and analysis of actual data, students' classroom experiences are sorted into five categories: reactive participation, total integration, conditional participation, marginal interaction and silent observation. As presented in Table 6.1, Mary, Khanh, Qinyi and Farah were placed in the group of 'reactive participation' modes; Ahmed represents total integration; Haijun and Hon are classified as conditional participators; Yaffa and Alisa as marginal participators; and Qiang as a silent observer.

6.3.1 Reactive Participation

This group of students' participation patterns largely depended on contextual factors rather than personal ones; they were more responsive to circumstances. Even in the same course, they developed very different participation modes depending on who they sat with, what subject they were studying and their internal feelings. I was aware that, to some extent, all participants are 'reactive participators' because everybody had different feelings in different classroom communities, and most participants' behaviours or participation modes varied slightly. However, regarding this group of reactive participators in this study, Liu's four categories could all be used to describe their participation modes in different sessions at different stages. Mary, Khanh, Farah and Qinyi could be identified as belonging to this category. Mary, Khanh and Qinyi were from the same programme, Education, while Farah was studying Internal Politics. All four of these participants were very positive about the importance of classroom participation and were motivated to share their opinions in class. They shared similar developing

participation modes and negotiated different participation patterns in different courses.

At the beginning of the semester, they were all a bit quiet, observing what was happening and trying to figure out what was expected from them and how the class was delivered in this new learning environment. After they saw how other students participated in class, they tried to contribute to the discussion, although with different modes in different classes. They interacted with the classroom climate since they tended to be quiet in the classes where most of the students were quiet. However, they were also more active when their peers were more vocal. They were very responsive to teachers' and peers' attitudes. If they felt that their participation was expected and valued, they would reach out to contribute to the discussion.

Mary felt that verbal participation in class was her responsibility when she had some original ideas to contribute to the class. However, she only talked when she felt comfortable. She reported that she felt different levels of inner security and a different sense of belonging and tolerance from peers in different classes. She said when she struggled with her English, she felt different depending on which class she was in. She felt it was easier to talk with L2 international students than native English-speaking peers, whom she found intimidating.

> "In the Research Methods course in Education and the Inclusive Pedagogy course, everyone was very patient because most of the them were international students, so I think they were more patient. But in the Education Enquiry course, not always. I felt sometimes they were very, they didn't say anything mean or anything like that, but I feel sometimes they got very frustrated when someone else spoke. Because maybe it was too slow and they wanted to keep speaking, so I think sometimes I felt like they were just, like, frustrated because it would take so long for other students to speak, for other non-English speaking students" (Mary, Interview 2).

Farah shared similar ideas. She said she participated more in her Research course than in her Internet course because of the instructors' different teaching styles.

She felt Christine was more aware of international students' learning difficulties than John.

> "In the research class taught by Christine, because she knew the situation, she tried to speak slower and tried to explain some certain topics that we were not familiar with. But in the Internet class, the teacher, John from America, he speaks really fast and he assumes everybody understands what he's said so he never controlled his speed and sometimes we were like, 'What was that? What was that?'" (Interview 3).

Qinyi's oral participation changed as the semester went on. She struggled to participate in activities at the beginning of the semester mainly because she was too aware of her language accuracy. However, as time passed, she negotiated different participation patterns in different courses. She reflected that her participation became more spontaneous and depended on the circumstances. She would feel motivated to speak up in class when the tutor was better at creating a supportive atmosphere, when she had a better knowledge of the subject, and when her peers were interested in her opinions.

6.3.2 Total Integration

Ahmed displayed the characteristics of the total integration pattern. He had a good knowledge of the classroom conventions as he had been educated at English-medium schools and he had a good knowledge of what was expected in the classroom. He could keep up with the class flow and participated in class naturally and spontaneously. Ahmed negotiated a very calm and peaceful demeanour in the classroom; one of his instructors, Sarah, commented about his participation throughout the two semesters, "I actually noticed he looked calm, not calmer but more confident, contributed, probably with a little bit more comfort, probably contributed as much as he did before. Somehow it just seemed more assured." He told me that he did not feel panicked or worried when he kept quiet. He was bilingual and his tutor also reported that "He was very confident in explaining and his level of English is very good. And I felt that the students were listening to him

and they didn't really question what he was saying" (Anna). However, being less active than the native English-speaking peers in his class, Ahmed was very critical of his verbal participation and he expressed that he only participated if he was sure of the answers and if he thought his contribution would be beneficial to others or "sometimes I had to start talking or participating because the class was too quiet".

6.3.3 Conditional Participation

As described above, the students in this category were usually motivated to contribute to discussions and to be verbally engaged in the classroom activities. However, they still found it difficult to speak up due to various reasons. Two of the 10 participants - Hon and Haijun – demonstrated the traits of this group and they negotiated conditional participation across different courses, albeit with slight differences. Both Haijun and Hon were enrolled in the International Politics programme. Haijun reported that he "only participated when I was sure of the answers and I never took risks", which corresponded to the characteristics of this category of participation pattern. Haijun added that he was very much aware of his identity as Chinese. Haijun had three years' full-time working experience in the Chinese government. He expressed a strong desire to talk and to discuss some issues in depth with his peers, but he said sometimes he was anxious and too conscious of his language fluency. He only participated when he was sure of his answers because he said that he felt his peers had a bias against Chinese students and he did not want to leave any negative impressions on his peers and instructors as a Chinese student. Compared to Haijun, Hon was much calmer and did not care about others' opinions. He was eager to share his ideas and he was especially active when the discussion was about current events or news. However, he lacked background knowledge in the subject area. When it came to theory or specific terminology, he was a bit quiet. He had come to study directly after his bachelor's degree, which was in a completely different area. Hon was much more confident in his English proficiency than Haijun, but he confessed that he would like to share

ideas in class and wished he had more comprehensive knowledge.

6.3.4 Marginal Interaction

Compared with conditional participation, marginal interaction is a less frequent participation mode. This category of students seldom spoke up in class, although they listened attentively. Usually, they would organise their expressions and ideas in their mind before they raised their hands. Yaffa and Alisa belonged to this category. Yaffa majored in Pedagogy, while Alisa was in Finance. Yaffa was more active in group discussions and from my observations, she worked well in a team. She expressed her opinions and she was also interested in others' views. However, she was a bit quiet in whole class discussions, as one of the instructors commented: "She doesn't always put up her hand, you know like, 'I want to say something', but in small groups she works really well. In the whole group if I ever asked her, she would always give me her opinion". Yaffa also commented that she felt it was easier to talk in small group discussions and she felt too much attention and pressure during whole class discussions. In addition, she told me that by the time she had organised her ideas and language and was ready to talk, her peers had already expressed similar ideas. She needed encouragement from peers and instructors.

Alisa's circumstances were a bit different from Yaffa's because of the nature of her programme. Alisa was in the Finance programme in the Department of Business. She was one of the only 10 non-Chinese students among a total of 300 students. Most of her courses were lecture-oriented and not much oral participation was expected. In one compulsory course, 300 students sat together in a lecture hall, although there were four sessions of interactive seminars. There was no interaction in the lectures, but sometimes the lecturer would ask whether they had any questions. However, Alisa commented that "the lecturer could not hear the students' questions properly due to the large size of the class, and they had to use a microphone". Alisa always sat in front and she asked questions sometimes,

but in a very soft voice. She said some of the questions were prepared before the class while she previewed the material. Two of her courses were followed by four interactive seminars respectively. She was more verbally engaged in one of the seminars than the other, being reactive to the different teaching styles of the two tutors. She said she felt different levels of security in these two seminars. She was more motivated to talk in the seminar whose tutor was more supportive and caring. In summary, Alisa's classroom participation was marginal due to the nature of her courses and her sense of security.

6.3.5 Silent Observation

This group of students hardly talked in class, but they might be mentally engaged and listening attentively. Qiang belonged to this group. He was enrolled in the same programme as Alisa, Finance in the Department of Business. Qiang was completely silent throughout the whole academic year in both lectures and seminars; however, he was an attentive listener and achieved a merit (with a B average) for his academic results. Qiang said he felt relaxed in the class and did not feel obliged to verbally participate because nobody forced him to participate and it was not assessed. He only asked questions once in front of the whole classroom, but he was active in asking questions during the breaks. Qiang told me when he went to ask questions during the break, the lecturer always encouraged him to ask questions in class, saying his questions were very good and could benefit other students too. However, Qiang never spoke up in class. Based on my observations, Qiang always sat at the front, listening to the lecture carefully and taking notes. Once he did not understand a question and he asked his peers sitting next to him. The noise they made drew the lecturer's attention, and he asked whether there was an issue and said he did not like people talking while he was talking. However, Qiang did not tell the lecturer his problem or say anything at all. Qiang told me after the class, "I am mainly concerned about my English and I don't think I can explain my question well with so much attention in class. And I don't want to waste others' time." In addition, Qiang said that he would digest the

knowledge better if there were some thinking time or pair discussion embedded within the lecture. He did not like speaking up in front of the whole class, but he appreciated the importance of small group discussions.

Because of the dominance of Chinese students within Business Department (Yu & Moskal, 2019), Chinese students seemed like host students while those from other countries and even UK students seemed like visiting students. Once Qiang told me he was very unhappy with his Chinese peers' behaviour in class when they laughed at one Indian student's strong accent. He said that the Indian student had asked a very good question, but the lecturer did not hear him clearly and asked him to repeat his question, and the large group of Chinese students all laughed. Qiang commented, "I don't think they have the right to laugh at this Indian student just because of his accent. They speak more fluent English than us. Everybody has a different accent. Shame!"

6.4 Factors Influencing Classroom Participation

The 10 focal international students were from different countries, with different professional and academic backgrounds, in various programmes that they were studying for various purposes. Their classroom participation was determined by various factors and the same factor may play different functions in the interactions of different individuals. Informed by Liu's (2002) five categories of influencing factors as an analytical framework (as shown in Figure 6-1), the data collected was coded and put into the five categories. This framework is comprehensive in covering various factors affecting participants' verbal participation. However, it does not present the changing levels of involvement over time. A common pattern was identified from respondents' answers: in the first interview, they talked more about the linguistic, cognitive and pedagogical factors, but as time passed, they focused more on the affective and sociocultural factors, especially the latter. In addition, the data did not fall into the five categories neatly. They overlapped and mutually affected one another.

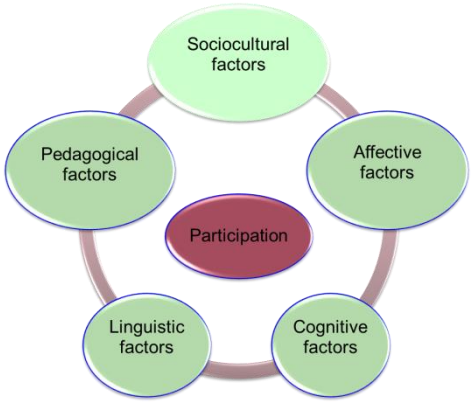

Figure 6-1 Five categories of influencing factors, adapted from Liu (2002)

6.4.1 Linguistic Factors

Linguistic factors refer to proficiency in the target language, communicative competence and accent (J. Liu, 2002). Other than Ahmed, nine of the 10 participants reported that their English proficiency influenced their oral engagement in class. However, it was observed that linguistic factors seem to affect more the conditional and marginal participators and silent observer rather than the reactive participator and total integrator. As the silent observer, Qiang reflected that the biggest barrier for him was his language proficiency. He thought he spoke "broken English", which held him back from asking questions in class or socialising with local people. Haijun, the conditional participator, stated that his English proficiency affected his expression of emotion and passion regarding some topics discussed in class. He said he had a lot to share in class, as the local students had little knowledge of how media worked in China, but he felt his language did not keep up with his thoughts. He even felt frustrated sometimes. Qinyi, the reactive participator, had a strong American accent and her English was very clear. She reported that people often complimented her on her accent, but her participation depended more on the degree to which her contribution was valued.

Linguistic competence also interplayed with the affective and sociocultural factors. The students who had greater language fluency and accuracy tended to be confident and assured of themselves in speaking up in class; for example,

Ahmed was bilingual, and he achieved total integration. However, their linguistic competence did not wholly determine their verbal participation. Some students attributed their inactive oral participation to their language proficiency while others reflected that it also depends how the person (peer or instructor) dealt with their answer. Some peers and even instructors would become impatient when the student spent a long time explaining their idea, which would discourage their future participation. Meanwhile, some peers and instructors showed interest in the ideas they presented while ignoring their language deficiency, which encouraged them to try harder to tell a longer story or to provide more information (as reported by Mary and Khanh). In addition, Qinyi and Farah reported that in their home countries and in their native languages, they were not active in speaking up in class. They felt they talked more here because of the different class delivery modes. In summary, linguistic factors played an important part in participants' classroom participation, but it also depended on their inner feelings and how they felt they were perceived in certain circumstances.

6.4.2 Cognitive Factors

Liu (2002) defines cognitive factors as any factors that are related to the students' prior learning experience, background knowledge or mental readiness. The participants' previous learning background and experiences affected the value they placed on verbal participation and their classroom behaviours. At the beginning of her studies, Khanh did not feel comfortable asking questions in class:

> "In Vietnam, it's just rote learning. I think you understand it because you just have the textbook and memorise it. Asking questions in class is rare. Sometimes you are judged by the meaning of the questions. If the questions are too simple, people will think that you didn't read the material, so people rarely asked anything in the class when it comes to very common questions" (Khanh, Interview 1).

Qinyi experienced the same issue as Khanh, feeling uneasy about speaking up in class when she did have questions. She also linked it to her previous classroom

experience in China:

> "Because I am used to taking what the teacher said for granted, if you really have some questions, you may ask your peers after class. But you will never interrupt the teacher in class and ask the question spontaneously. I feel I am used to taking notes and reciting what the teacher told us" (Interview 1).

At the beginning, Khanh and Qinyi found it challenging to join the discussion and to keep up with the class flow. Nevertheless, they both negotiated 'reactive participation' styles while they got more familiar with the new learning environment. In this case, their prior learning experience affected their participation more at an early stage.

On the other hand, the participants' background knowledge of the subject determined the sources and depth of their discussion content. Five of the 10 participants had studied completely different subjects for their bachelor's degrees. Khanh commented that her accounting background did not help in her current Educational studies at all and she also found it challenging to finish the readings assigned in each course. She spent a lot of time in the library to get familiar with education terminology to better be able to join in discussions in class. Ahmed stated, "When I know the topic I am participating in, I would participate more. That affected my learning" (Interview 3). Hon and Haijun were completely silent in some sessions about the history of British politics due to their limited knowledge. Even their native English-speaking peers sympathised with their potential difficulties, as Brenda commented:

> "I wondered whether it was a little bit difficult for people to participate because the content of the course was so kind of, it was so strictly about British history situations and British context. I did wonder whether that might have been kind of going into a very detailed level and that was such a diverse group. Only four people from the UK and everyone else was from other countries, so it was a little bit strange because the people who are from the UK would have all that background knowledge to be able to grasp what was going on, then people not from the UK just might feel like there was a bit jump. I felt a bit bad. I felt maybe it wasn't really inclusive or accessible"

6.4.3 Pedagogical Factors

Liu (2002) describes the pedagogical factor as including time and space to speak up, teaching styles, as well as whether participation is assessed. This study suggests more sub-factors for this category: lesson types, teaching content/curriculum design, the assigning of a reading list, group allocation and class size. According to my data, having time and space to speak up can help motivate students to share their ideas. For example, Mary compared her experiences in Sandie's class and Martina's and reflected on the reasons for her active participation in Martina's:

> "I think she always gives space for everybody to talk because in Sandie's class, most of the time was given to the native English-speaking people. There was always that table with UK and American students. They took most of the speaking time. I think in Martina's class, it was more divided so everyone could speak."

In one of the courses observed, the instructor tried to engage people, but sometimes she threw out a question and then quickly moved on. There was a lack of time for students to think and discuss among themselves. Even one of the native English-speaking peers commented, "It wasn't an easy class for anyone to participate in" (Brenda).

Some complaints were made about the teaching content not being inclusive or accessible enough. Hon from Hong Kong observed that when the discussion topic was related to China, the group of quiet Chinese students from Mainland China would make efforts to speak up.

> "In these few weeks, I found one interesting phenomenon in my research media classes with my Chinese classmates: if the lecturer puts something related to China into the discussion, some classmates are willing and more motivated to speak and express their opinions. George put China's One Child Policy into the discussion in a class, and some classmates who seldom speak were quite emotional and excited to express opinions" (Hon, reflective journal 5).

According to the analysis of the teaching materials, the teaching content was mainly British- or Western-focused without considering knowledge from other countries or the learning needs of the students. This issue existed across different departments. In my observation in one session at the Department of Sociology and Social Policy at the beginning of the class, the lecturer said, “I am going to tell you about British history today,” and a Chinese girl said, “You are talking about British history but most of us are from China.” However, the lecturer just responded, “Yeah, I know that,” and ignored her comments. Then the lecturer went into a long history of the development of English capitalism, talking non-stop for about an hour and a half without any handouts or a PowerPoint. I noticed a few students roll their eyes and start to play on their mobile phones. After the class, on my way out with a few international students, they complained that the content and that way of teaching were not useful for them and they could not follow what the lecturer was talking about. They complained about having no time to think and no time to take notes. The lecturer, George, admitted, "Yeah, sometimes, but they need this foundation. It's a must to give them some basic knowledge in the beginning.” Nevertheless, a native English-speaking student commented in the interview that she found it boring to hear about the history of Britain, which she knew already. She found it to be a waste of time and she did not feel she had learnt anything, especially without any discussions in class.

The preparatory reading before the classes determined the depth and quality of discussion because in a lot of courses, the discussion activities were based on the readings assigned. Nevertheless, some instructors provided a rather long list of reading materials, which was challenging for international students to read and understand. It was challenging for most home students as well to finish all the reading materials. One instructor, Anna, reflected that in the first semester there were a couple of sessions falling apart because the discussions were based on the reading materials assigned, which the students had not read. In the second semester, Anna decided to assign only one article per session and the students were required to bring questions to class and discuss them with the rest of the

group members. Anna found that this approach was very helpful to get students more engaged in the discussion since they were all prepared with something to talk about.

Group allocations had a great influence on students' interactions with each other. In some courses, the same people sat together for the whole semester, while in other courses, the instructors split the students up into different groups every week. Mary had a seminar, in which the native English-speaking peers always sat together:

> "The group of British students sat together and discussed by themselves. I think one of the things to help people feel more confident participating is, like, making people open up a bit, make sure that they get to know other people's names and interact with different people" (Mary).

Natalie expressed that she preferred to interact with different people as well:

> "I've noticed all the courses that they do try to do group work so that we can get to know the others, which is very helpful because otherwise you always speak to the same people" (Natalie).

One of the instructors, Sandie, asked the students to remain in the same groups throughout the whole semester. There were four established groups in the class. However, there was always one group, which struggled with their discussions and was quieter than the others. Sandie reflected, "I would try to address some of the issues for the rest of the semester and how we mix that group up potentially. So maybe I come in next year and say, 'Right we are sitting in different seats, so we speak to different people and we speak to different groups'."

Classroom participation was not assessed in any of the courses observed. However, Mary, Khanh, Farah and Haijun, as well as a few native English-speaking peers, all advocated that their participation should be assessed considering the amount of preparatory work they had to do before the class. Tracy thought it would encourage international students' participation: "I think assessing you on your

participation is a very good idea. I think it will really help the international students and then you learn. I suppose the fear, it goes because you have to do it." However, a few instructors were opposed to this idea because they were concerned about how to make the assessment fair and reliable for each student.

Lesson types and class size affected participants' feelings on the necessity of participation. The nature of lesson types also played an important role in students' motivation to participate. Lecturing was practised across all the three different programmes, while being especially common in the Department of Business. Seminars were more common in the Department of Education and the Department of Sociology and Social Policy. Small group discussion, as a specific classroom activity, was often used within the Department of Education and the Department of Sociology and Social Policy, while it was seldom applied in the two courses I observed in the Department of Business. Whole class discussions embedded within lectures were commonly practiced across all the three departments studied. There was less participation in the two courses observed in the Department of Business. Khanh thought the size of a class played an important part in her participation: "In a smaller size, I feel comfortable. So, I don't push myself more" (Interview 1). In addition, table arrangement also had an effect on students' participation because it was indicative of the concepts of learning and teaching that were being applied (van den Berg & Cillessen, 2015). Some lecturers frequently changed table arrangements based on their teaching aims. As noted in the field notes, Martina usually asked students to move their tables into groups. She explained during the interview that it could not only facilitate discussion, but that group activities also created a kind of community: "It offers chances for people to sit and chat during coffee, during lunch, to get to know each other, because I think creating a community of learners is actually quite important." Nevertheless, the instructors also reported the that physical constraints of a small classroom and system constrains meant there was not enough room available to divide the students into one extra group. (Martina and Achilles).

6.4.4 Sociocultural Factors

Sociocultural factors refer to the cultural understanding of the role of the student in the classroom, interactions/conventions with peers and instructors, and interpersonal relationships with other class members (Liu, 2002). The reactive participators: Mary, Khanh, Farah and Qinyi, were most susceptible to responding and adapting to the sociocultural factors. According to the analysis of their lived classroom experiences, there were ongoing changes in their participation patterns at different stages of the academic year, in different contexts and with different people. There was also a common tendency among them to compare and contrast their current learning activities with those back home in terms of cultural norms, images of instructors, and their identities as a learner.

Different educational cultures portray different images of good students in class. Qinyi reported that in China, students were not supposed to interrupt instructors while they were talking. Khanh shared a similar understanding about respecting the authority of teacher and being conscious of others' time in Vietnam. In the new learning context, Khanh was still very conscious of others' time while posing questions in class and if she had questions, she would try to answer them herself or ask at the end of the class. In addition, Khanh found some of the questions that her peers asked were easy and could have been found in the reading materials assigned.

> "I do have questions but sometimes when I feel like it's not really important, I will not ask it because I think I will save time for other students' concerns. I would prefer to read the material myself or ask at the end of the class" (Khanh, Interview 1).

Instructor Achilles expressed his understanding of Chinese students' classroom behaviours: "Knowing the culture, we know the majority of the students from China. My understanding is that the culture is that students wouldn't talk a lot anyway from their background. Maybe I'm wrong, that's my understanding."

Participants' relationships with their peers and instructors greatly affected their verbal participation and engagement in classroom activities. Yaffa found it was easier for her to speak up in class when she developed closer relationships with her peers and instructors: "I feel easier to participate this semester because we develop the bounds between teachers and friends" (Interview 3). Additionally, Yaffa also valued the importance of interactions with native English-speakers. She reflected that she benefitted from communicating with her American peers:

> "American girl, we always have a chat inside and outside the classroom. She wants to learn the culture of Thai and I want to learn the culture of the US, so we exchanged a lot of knowledge. This improves my English too because she always wants me to use correct sentence, not the broken English" (Interview 3).

The student cohort also affected the classroom culture and dynamic. Tracy observed the differences between two courses that had different cohorts:

> "There was not enough of the mixture. While in the new course, I would say we only have two or three international students. And because of that, they make an extra effort. So, there is a very big difference. I think when the international students are the minority, they tend to be more participative. It is unfair. Having that massive group like that, it is holding back everybody's learning because the whole part of educational processes is learning from each other. Having that truly international experience means meeting a lot of different people, doesn't it? (Tracy).

Instructor Achilles commented, "Generally speaking, if there were more nationalities in the group, I think it would generate more interaction. The students themselves will feel better. It will be a truly international experience for them." Compared to the native English-speaking students, some instructors found that the L2 international students had less interaction with them. For example, Achilles reflected, "If you think we have about 300 students in class, I have not received that many emails, while I have received far more emails from the undergraduate students who are native English speakers." Students also had a different image of their instructors in different cultures, which also affected their communication patterns with their instructors. Instructor Martina reflected that she did not feel

comfortable when students called her “professor”, so she told her students, especially the Asians, a few times that it would be fine to call her by her name rather than “professor”. Nevertheless, they still called her “professor” through the whole academic year. In Asian culture, one could never call a teacher by their name, and saying “professor” shows respect. Similarly, Achilles reflected that native English-speaking students found it acceptable to challenge him, while his Asian students were more obedient.

> “I think it is a matter of culture again, in a sense. If you come from a culture where the tutor or the professor is the one with the knowledge, then you may not say anything. I think it is a matter of culture. While here the native English-speaking students, Scottish students, think, ‘Yeah, I can challenge that, perfectly fine’” (Instructor Achilles).

In addition, students’ identities, power and agency had significant impact on their classroom participation patterns. It was a process of negotiating their backgrounds, membership, competence, and self-image in classroom communities. Haijun reported that it was a struggle for him to “switch between different identities” (Reflective Journal 6), by which he meant the identity disparities between his previous label as top student back in China and current image as quiet and incompetent international student. His concerns of losing face or protecting his self-image prevented him to speak up in verbal activities, especially among large group discussions. Farah’s marginalised experience in an option course, as she reported in the second of our informal casual interviews, presented the ‘gatekeeping’ power of her native English-speaking peers through dominating the discussion and ignoring her silence.

6.4.5 Affective Factors

Liu (2002) defines affective factors as any factors related to anxiety, confidence, motivation, risk-taking and personality. Affective factors consider both teachers’ and learners’ personal and emotional behaviours and their influences from an educational/psychological point of view. This category of factors is interwoven

with the previous four categories discussed, which can foster or inhabit participants' verbal participation. For example, students' linguistic competence could affect their confidence to speak up and might lead to anxiety as well. Qinyi reflected that she tended to be anxious when she spoke up because she was very conscious of making grammatical or vocabulary mistakes. Pedagogically, a warm and caring instructor could increase students' motivation to talk in class. Mary expressed stronger motivation to talk in one course, the instructor of which knew her name and cared about her opinions. In addition, students' socio-cultural backgrounds can affect the way they communicate with other people. Hon said sometimes he had questions, but he was too shy to ask them. As he wrote in his reflective journal, "I had questions that I did not ask in Claire's class. I was afraid that my question would be off-topic and I admit I was shy to ask." Haijun felt being shy was a common characteristic of Chinese students and he withdrew from verbal participation when he felt shyness and a lack of confidence, as he described:

> "I know we Chinese people have a common characteristic of being shy, but I did not realise I was shy until I came here and sometimes lack of confidence, which affected all my behaviours" (Interview 1).

Emotionally, the participants were also greatly affected, as it was the first time for most of the participants to live abroad on their own, far from home. Sadly, unexpected family and relationship issues affected both Yaffa's and Khanh's studies and thus their motivation to speak up in class. Yaffa had to go back to Thailand for a few weeks and she found it hard to focus in class when she came back to study, let alone participate verbally:

> "It was very hard for me because I cried a lot and I have to pressure myself a lot to sit and learn with my peers. I even cried in the lecture class, but I still have to do some work" (Interview 3).

Qinyi had very low mood at the beginning of her studies because of personal relationship changes after she came to study here. Qinyi said that living in the new environment made her feel lonely and losing her spiritual support back home

made her feel worse. She went to psychological counselling for a few months. However, although Qinyi was sad, she tried to be focused in class and she was impressed with the new interactive class delivery mode. She was active in group discussions, but she felt anxious about speaking in front of the whole class. Khanh shared a similar story, as she was affected by family issues and she felt too sad to concentrate on her studies.

> "Because of this study I have got some sad things. It's because my family and my relationship and there was a time when I told myself it's okay to be sad and I did nothing" (Khanh, Interview 2).

Beard, Clegg and Smith (2007, p.235) understand students as "affective and embodied selves" whose emotions play an important role in their learning. The affective dimensions of verbal participation consider the influences of the participants' feelings, emotions and internal characteristics.

6.5 Summary

This chapter has summarised the overall patterns that have been identified through cross-case analyses; these patterns outline different conceptualisations of classroom participation, participation modes and influencing factors. There was wide recognition of the benefits of verbal participation among international students, however, different conceptualisations of classroom participation from their peers and instructors brought about tensions in their interactions and barriers in understanding each other. There were misinterpretations of each other's classroom performances, which adversely affected international students' integration within the new learning environment. Their native English-speaking peers were challenged by intercultural awareness, tolerance and strategies to make use of international students' input. They recognised international students' potential learning difficulties, but they did not know how to cooperate with them. Additionally, instructors were confronted with challenges to get students verbally engaged and to accommodate different learners' diverse learning needs. Large

class sizes and the dominance of one nationality of students in class challenged them when it came to arranging classroom activities, which were especially obvious for those in the Department of Business and the subject of Education at the Department of Education.

Five categories of different participation patterns outline the focal international students' different processes of negotiating verbal participation and describe the characteristics of each pattern. Building on Liu's four categories – total integration, conditional participation, marginal interaction and silent observation - another category of 'reactive participation' was introduced to describe the group of students who were more responsive to the contextual factors and achieved distinctive participation modes in different classroom communities. Finally, Liu's (2002) five categories of influencing factors were applied as an analytic framework to categorise different influencing factors and to further explain how and why the participation patterns were developed. The description and discussions in this chapter have presented the general patterns across the 10 cases, while the following two chapters will present the particularities of individual cases.

Chapter 7 Negotiating Participation in Different Classroom Communities

7.1 Overview

This chapter examines participation patterns and influencing factors contextually. Each factor did not have a deterministic role in the students' participation; it was a complicated and fluid process influenced by the complex interrelationships of many factors. Building on the overall patterns outlined in the previous chapter, this chapter presents the case studies of two individual students to illustrate how the common patterns were displayed in individual cases and to provide insights into one of the most salient themes of the findings: the influence of different communities on students' identity negotiation and verbal participation.

Grounded in the theoretical framework of 'community of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) as discussed in Chapter Three, this chapter explores classrooms as different communities and examines participants' participation patterns in specific contexts. Contrary to some previous research findings that suggest the predetermined influence of communicative competence and cultural differences, this chapter challenges this view and presents the interactive and socially situated nature of verbal classroom participation and thus the significance of a supportive and inclusive classroom community. Community of practice, as one of the most important concepts in situated learning theory, refers to a community that shares practices (Hoadley, 2012). Verbal participation in intercultural classrooms is viewed as a community of practice. Both national and international students share the opportunity to participate legitimately in verbal participation practices in classroom communities. Lave and Wenger (1991) present the concept of 'legitimate periphery participation' to define 'communities of practice' from a process-based perspective as groups in which learners enter a community and gradually get used to its practices. The focus international students came to study abroad and joined a new community of learning. However, whether they would get used to the target community practice depended on various and

interconnected factors.

Regarding verbal participation in the context of classrooms as an academic community of practice, I focused on the students' experiences and feelings within different courses by comparing and contrasting their different performances and perspectives in different classes. I have chosen to write about the cases of Mary and Khanh in detail in this chapter because they had very different participation patterns in different courses or even in different sessions of the same course. Their participation modes were described as 'reactive participation' in Chapter Six as they were more responsive to the contextual and personal factors and negotiated different participation patterns in different classroom communities. While other cases are equally important to this research, these two cases can strongly present the present theme.

The two case studies will be presented through chronological narratives in order to present the negotiation of participation and identities as an on-going process. Linking back to the participation patterns and influencing factors developed in the previous chapter, these two cases demonstrate how these particular students negotiated different participation modes in different communities and how they were influenced by different categories of factors. The data for this chapter was based on a combination of interview transcripts, observation notes and students' reflective journals. I observed two courses of each participant and they also reported on other courses they attended through interviews and weekly reports. In what follows, I will present: 1) the development of verbal participation patterns throughout the study; 2) a description and discussion of two courses observed by myself and the most impressive course reported on by the students; 3) the verbal participation patterns they negotiated in different classroom communities; 4) the reciprocal relationship between their participation modes and identity.

7.2 The Case of Mary

Mary was 27 years old and was from Mexico. She studied for a Master of Education in the Department of Education. Her Bachelor's degree was in Psychology and she had two years' teaching experience with children who had autism and other special needs. Driven by her passion for teaching and self-improvement, Mary came to pursue further studies and expand her educational knowledge. This was not the first time for Mary to live aboard; when she was nine years old, she studied in the US for two years. However, Mary said that those two years' studying experience in America did not help improve her English-speaking competence because she stopped using English after she came back to Mexico. Comparing with her learning experience in Mexico, Mary felt challenged by the intensity of her studies here. She described studying in this new learning environment as "jump into a pool and start swimming" since from the first week she was exposed to homework, projects and long reading lists, while in Mexico she said it was more gradual and the first week was normally light, offering just a brief introduction. Mary said education in Mexico was traditionally teacher-centred and she did not like it. She attended private schools and classes, which could be more interactive, but this depended on the instructor. Mary said she was used to interactive classes but normally she was not someone who would actively speak up in class.

Mary said, "In Mexico, studying abroad is very good for your future careers and it's a big plus if you study in an English-speaking country." However, before she came to study, she had concerns about her "level of English, the different culture, day-to-day classroom and how the teacher-student relationship work or how they do certain things". She expressed one of her expectations as "meeting with people with new ideas, in different ways to work and view things." Another expectation she had was "to speak better, to be able to explain what I know better in English and work on my grammar, and also to polish my accent".

7.2.1 Development of Verbal Participation Patterns throughout the Study

Mary's modes of oral classroom participation varied according to different classroom activities and improved as the term went on. Since the beginning of the term, Mary was active in small group discussions. She told me that she always finished all the assigned readings and she enjoyed sharing different ideas with her group members. However, she did not participate much in whole class discussions and seldom volunteered to speak in front of the whole class in the first few weeks. Nevertheless, she was always engaged and listened attentively to the lecturer; during my observations, she often sat at the front of the classroom, took notes and nodded now and then.

As the term continued, Mary became an increasingly active participant in the whole class discussions. Especially after the first month, she started to share her opinions more spontaneously and naturally. Once, the lecturer initiated a discussion on the current inclusive educational situations in different countries, and Mary took a turn introducing the educational situation in Mexico right away when another student had finished talking. This contributed to the dynamic flow of the discussion and also encouraged other students to share their opinions. One of her instructors, Martina, commented at the end of the course, "I think she is an active participant. I think her experiences, her understanding and her proficiency in English allowed her to participate well, very well" (Martina). In the second term, Mary reported that she felt "more confident in participating in the whole class discussion" (Interview 3).

7.2.2 Negotiation of Participation in Different Classroom Communities

This section compares Mary's experiences across three courses as the semester went on. Mary was enrolled in six courses throughout the two semesters, taking three in each semester. Table 7-1 presents information on the three courses that I will discuss, two of which were observed while the other was reported on by the

respondent. The titles of these courses have been anonymised to protect the participants' privacy. My observation of the Education Enquiry course and the Inclusive Pedagogy course was ongoing for the entire semester. I interviewed the instructors of both courses as well as three of Mary's native English-speaking peers. The third course, Adult Education, was carried out in the second semester, and all the information was reported by Mary and her peers in interviews, emails and her reflective journals.

Course	Education Enquiry	Inclusive Pedagogy	Adult Education
Demographic information	19 students: 6 British 1 American 1 Italian 1 Mexican 10 Chinese	23 students: 1 Scottish 1 German 2 Greek 1 Estonian 1 Mexican 17 Chinese	19 students 15 Scottish 1 Greek 1 South African 1 Mexican 1 Chinese
Class format	2h students' presentations	6h seminar	2h lecture
Participation modes	Marginal interaction	Total integration	Total integration

Table 7-1 Information on the three courses Mary enrolled in

Education Enquiry

The Education Enquiry course lasted for 10 weeks. It had a diverse student cohort in a relatively small community of 19 students: six British, one American, one Italian, one Mexican (Mary herself) and 10 Chinese students. The first three weeks were in the form of a big lecture of 80 students. From the fourth week, they were allocated into four different groups and took turns doing presentations. The presentation was graded, accounting for 25% of the whole assessment. However, verbal participation was not graded, and the presentation was graded on the research topic rather than the presenter's performance. Each week, three to four students took turns doing their presentations individually. Each presentation was followed by group discussions commenting on the research topic and the

arguments developed, and then followed by a whole class discussion. Each group selected one representative to speak for it.

In my observation, all the students were well prepared for their presentations. Nevertheless, the students did not integrate. From the first presentation session, the students were divided into three groups and they sat in the same group for the rest of the term. All the native English-speaking students sat in one group while the Italian student sat with one group of three Chinese students and Mary was with the other group of four Chinese students. There was no break and there were hardly interactions among the different groups. There was a clear divide between the native English-speaking and non-native English-speaking students, not only in their seating but also in their participation frequencies. Generally speaking, the class had lively discussions, especially in group discussions. A main difference in performances was observed between native English-speaking and non-native English-speaking students during the whole class discussions, where the native English-speaking students talked more than non-native English-speaking students. Additionally, the native English-speaking students represented their group spontaneously and naturally while the non-native English-speaking students in the other two groups took turns and felt obliged to speak for their groups. Although the instructor wanted to provide equal opportunities for everyone to speak and she usually asked the other group members whether they had anything to add, it was generally only the native English-speaking group whose members had something else to add, while the other members of the non-native English-speaking groups would stay quiet.

Mary enjoyed the presentation form of the class design: “That's where I got to see other people's perspective and I learned a lot how the education system works in other countries” (Interview 1). At the beginning of the course, Mary was therefore highly motivated to participate in discussions. She volunteered to be one of the first presenters and her tutor commented that she gave an excellent presentation and demonstrated a good understanding of her research topic. However, she

reflected that she was very nervous and felt challenged because she presented after a native English-speaking teacher. As noted in my observation notes, there was a heated discussion after the teacher's presentation, which also took more time than allocated, resulting in less time being left for Mary. Mary did not get as many questions as her peer had. During the interview, Mary stated, "I think her presentation was very good. I was so nervous since we have similar subjects, I was nervous to speak to her." As the semester went on, Mary lost the motivation to be verbally engaged as she found her native English-speaking peers intimidating due to linguistic factors:

> "Because maybe you don't have the same level of vocabulary, even if they understand you, sometimes I feel that I am not expressing myself that well, because I cannot find that word in English (Interview 2).

She also complained about the native-English-speaking students being dominant and insisting on their opinions. Mary always felt short of time and "space" to participate in this class:

> "I think it will be helpful if you feel like there is space for you to talk. Because in this class, I feel it's more dominated by the native English-speakers, so sometimes even by the time, we don't have time and the next presentation has to go, so there is not enough time, like room to speak. And they sometimes even just end up speaking, answering themselves like between them. So, it doesn't feel like there is room to participate" (Interview 2).

From a pedagogical perspective, Mary did not like the group allocations with all the native English-speaking students sitting in one group. She argued that it was rare to have such a diverse group of students within the class and regretted that she could not make the most of it. Although she was not happy with the dominance of the native English-speaking students, Mary expressed that "it would be nice, a good opportunity to talk with them" (Mary, Interview 2). This indicates that she was willing to communicate with that group of students but just had no chance. She added that she would have enjoyed this course more if the course instructor had allocated equal chances for non-native English-speaking students to speak

more. Apparently, Mary did not like the course leader's arrangement of putting students in the same group from the first week. However, in the interview with the course leader, Sandie commented:

> "I prefer to just let them sit where they want. And then once it started in those groups, then I don't like for me to impose a change. I prefer not to impose a change on them. I try to give them freedom".

Sandie presented different understanding of group arrangements from Mary, resulting from different expectations and perceptions of classroom participation.

Inclusive Pedagogy

The Inclusive Pedagogy course was lecture-orientated interwoven with group discussions. It was a whole-day course lasting from 9am until 3.30pm. There were 22 students in the class: one Scottish, one German, two Greek, one Mexican (Mary) and 17 Chinese students. The majority of the students in this course were Chinese students, most of them without an educational background or work experiences. However, Mary, three European peers and one Scottish teacher had all studied education and had work experiences in educational practices. Mary enjoyed Inclusive Pedagogy more than Education Enquiry in the first semester and she also participated more in it. Most students sat in the same places when they came to the classroom throughout the semester. However, the course instructor, Martina, had different discussion activities and group arrangements each week. The Chinese students were a bit quiet in the course, while Mary and the other four non-Chinese students were active in sharing their experiences and perspectives.

Mary attributed her preference for this course to the supportive instructor and friendly peers. What Mary talked about the most when discussing Inclusive Pedagogy was the course instructor, Martina. Mary said Martina was very nice and made everyone feel comfortable and relaxed by talking slowly, explaining complex concepts and providing encouraging feedback. She commented, "I like how she

taught and also what she taught. She makes it very easy to learn and she also gives a lot of confidence to everybody to speak in class" (Mary, Interview 2). "Martina is very good at explaining. When anybody used a term and she will turn around and say, 'Oh, in Scotland, this is this for this school'" (Mary, interview 3). Mary felt secure when she made mistakes. She still struggled to find vocabulary in her mind, but she knew her peers were not judgemental and were very patient. In addition, she also appreciated the presence of the Scottish secondary teacher in the class, who she said acted as an important resource, presenting what the Scottish educational system was like and how it worked. Meanwhile, the Scottish teacher was also very conscious of her participation within the class and she did not want to dominate to the detriment of others' participation. Mary felt very welcome to participate in this class both from the instructor and from her peers. She thought her knowledge of the subject and comprehension of the reading materials played an important part in her oral participation. She believed her academic background and professional experiences enabled her to share more with her peers.

Mary reflected at the end of the first term that she should not have been so self-conscious about expressing herself, as she felt it took her a long time to get involved. Instead, she decided to make a change in the second semester and to give it a try even if it might take a long time for her to organise her ideas and language. In the second term, her participation patterns and feelings varied a lot in the three different courses.

Adult Education

The Adult Education course had the most diverse student cohort among all the courses Mary took. There were 19 students: 15 Scottish, one Greek, one South African, one Mexican (Mary) and one Chinese. This course was compulsory for students of another major and Mary was the only student from her major. The class was delivered in various forms, including lectures, whole class discussions,

small group discussions and pair work. According to Mary's description, "That's the class where I have seen more people participate" (Interview 3). Mary said even the Chinese student in this class spoke regularly, which differed from her impressions of Chinese students' performances in other courses.

Mary spoke highly of Adult Education and she praised this classroom community as inclusive, diverse and supportive. She said that the instructor was creating a friendly and supportive atmosphere in the classroom:

> "The teacher is very aware of everyone in the class and she tries to get everyone's opinion. She doesn't force you to participate but I think she hopes you learn. And she is very nice. It doesn't matter if you make mistakes. I think you feel easier to speak and because there is also...like that's the class where I have seen more people participate" (Mary, interview 3).

Mary achieved total integration in this course; she reported in the interview that she felt motivated to share her opinions in such a supportive community. Mary confessed that she had little background knowledge of this subject, but she enjoyed the course mainly because of the group of peers and the caring lecturer. Even though Mary was the only student from a different major while most students in this course had already known each other since the previous semester, everyone was very friendly to her. She felt included and integrated into this class community very quickly. She described that this was the only class in which everyone knew each other's names. She felt a sense of belonging when they called her by her name even though it was never pronounced quite right. She felt her input was expected and also highly valued.

> "I think everybody was very interested in everyone's opinion. Sometimes I think, sometimes in other classes, I feel like people are just waiting for you to finish. You know they don't really, like, interested… [In this class] They were interested in your opinion. It was more like a group. (Mary, Interview 3).

In addition, Mary was impressed by the instructor's pedagogical practices. Mary argued that the instructors' various classroom activities not only enhanced

students' engagement in class, but also promoted integration among students.

> "She would use a lot of different activities. Every class wasn't the same. She would like PPT, but she would also use movement, like moving the chair around. You never really work with the same person. You would always be in different groups. I think it helps us to get for you to different people, so you are not always talking to people who sat next to you. I did, I feel more part of the class" (Mary, Interview 3).

Mary's rapport with peers and the instructor contributed to her integration within this course. The sociocultural factors and pedagogical practices played a more significant role than the linguistic and cognitive factors, while fostered positive influences from affective factors, i.e., stronger motivation to contribute more to this course.

7.2.3 Summary of Mary's Participation across Different Courses

Examined from the perspective of "community of practice", Mary's different participation patterns in different courses could be explained by her different senses of identity, namely her competence and membership as a learner, in different classroom communities. In the first semester, Mary negotiated very different participation patterns and feelings in Education Enquiry and Inclusive Pedagogy. First, the fact that Mary felt challenged and dominated by her native English-speaking peers in Education Enquiry was mainly due to her concerns over her competence. She found a lack of opportunity and space for her to speak since it took time for her to organise her language. There was a lack of legitimacy for her participation. However, in Inclusive Pedagogy, where the majority of students were non-native English-speaking international students, Mary found it easier to speak up because she thought they sympathised with each other's difficulties and were more tolerant.

> "In course Inclusive Pedagogy, everyone was very patience, because most of the them are international students, so I think they were more patient. But in course Education Enquiry, not always, I feel sometimes they were very, they

> didn't say anything mean or anything like that, but I feel sometimes they got very frustrated when someone else spoke. Because maybe it was too slow and they wanted to keep speaking, so I think sometimes I felt like they were just, like, frustrated as it would take so long to speak for other students, for other non-English-speaking students" (Mary, Interview 2).

Mary felt different levels of confidence, inner security and tolerance from peers in different classes. It was clear that her concerns about her English competence were closely related to the reaction she got from other classroom community members.

On the other hand, her sense of membership in a class community also had a significant influence on Mary's participation. As discussed above, she achieved total integration in Adult Education, and she felt she belonged to the group. Both Education Enquiry and Adult Education had a number of native English-speaking students, but Mary felt marginalised by them in Education Enquiry while she became a member in Adult Education, participating verbally.

> "I think everybody was very interested in everyone's opinion. Sometimes I think, sometimes in other classes, I feel like people are just waiting for you to finish. You know they don't really, like, interested…They were interested in your opinion. It was more like a group. (Interview 3).

Mary reported that in the second semester she felt "more confident in participating in the whole class discussion because I do feel my English gets better, more fluent but it also depends on the class" (Interview 2). Mary admitted that her English proficiency had a great effect on her oral classroom participation, but she thought it was "more about if I feel comfortable in that group" (Interview 3). Another dimension of membership observed was her closeness to Asian students. As Mary reflected herself, she thought she would be closer to the Westerners, as a white woman herself. However, she identified more closely with the Asian students because she found they shared a lot of similar difficulties and values. Mary talked more when she sat with Asian students, but she felt marginalised when she was with the native English-speaking Westerners. Additionally, as discussed

earlier, students' knowledge of the subject has a great effect on their participation. Mary argued, "It's very hard to participate when you didn't have a good knowledge of the subject." However, Adult Education was a new topic for Mary, and she did not have any academic or professional background, but she still managed to achieve total integration in this course, which underscores the importance of a sense of membership in a community. Mary reported that Adult Education was also the only course that had any social activities outside the classroom, although only once. Mary observed that there was a lack of interactions among peers in this new learning context, which was very different from her learning experience back in Mexico: "When in Mexico, we tend to be very, we interact more with your classmates. I mean you have very good friends and you kind of also interact with people and here it's more, like, individual" (Interview 1). The lack of interactions with peers was not helpful for developing membership in a classroom community.

Mary said that an ideal situation of participating orally in class included a few factors: good understanding of the lecture content, a good mixture of different classroom patterns and individual thinking time, and equal chances to talk. She suggested that there should be some activities that get students together socially because she did not get chance to see or talk to the other students often. From her first interview, Mary suggested that teachers should give credit for classroom participation: "You have to prepare so much for each class that I wish they would take that into the grade, like participation in the seminar" (Interview 3). Mary also emphasised the significance of having thinking time before discussions, which can be used to organise both language and ideas.

To summarise, Mary identified a few factors that had great effects on her oral classroom participation: English proficiency, classroom conventions, knowledge of the subject, relationships with peers and instructors, pedagogical practices and different classroom communities. After Mary had gained more confidence in her English and had got used to the classroom conventions, she knew what she was

expected in terms of classroom participation. Recognising the influence of subject knowledge on her participation, she did extensive reading and was always well prepared for class discussions. In the second semester, she developed a stronger sense of belonging in Adult Education and she acknowledged that as her language proficiency and knowledge developed, her classroom participation depended more on which class or group she was in. On balance, pedagogical practices and contextual factors had a greater impact on Mary's classroom participation patterns, including class routines, the arrangement of classroom activities and rapport with peers. Mary's particular case demonstrates that Liu's (2002) five categories of influencing factors serve as a constructive framework to outline the potential factors that might affect international students' classroom participation, but it cannot present the interplay among different factors or the fluid nature of development.

7.3 The Case of Khanh

Khanh was 26 years old and was from Vietnam. She had a bachelor's degree in accounting, which she was not interested in. According to her description, she chose this subject when she was 18 and she did not yet know what she liked. Unfortunately, it turned out that she did not enjoy it. However, she developed her interest in education when she did volunteer work for a Non-Governmental Organisation summer camp project as an event assistant during her summer holiday at the end of her first year of university. The summer camp invited American university students to work with local Vietnamese undergraduate students to teach rural students English and skills to motivate them to pursue further study at university. As an assistant, Khanh helped with applications for government permission and accommodation bookings before the programme started, and when the programme started, she lived with the American students to help with their daily lives. Khanh reflected that this experience improved her English fluency and enriched her knowledge of teaching practices.

After one year of volunteer work, Khanh was employed as a full-time staff member by the organisation because the manager was impressed by her ability and performance. She did this job for four years until she obtained the offer and funding for her postgraduate studies. Working and studying together, Khanh was very busy during her undergraduate studies and she said she was very happy now, as she had time and funding to learn about something she was passionate about. However, Khanh was also concerned about her lack of educational background knowledge: “I think it’s very new to me when it comes to reading material because there are a lot of educational terms. So, I have to Google all the time. I was worried I couldn't catch up with the lecture and I am still worried now.”

As this was her first time studying and living abroad, Khanh found everything new to her but she was very positive about trying new things:

> “Everything is so new here, from taking the bus to going to the market, and I feel like a child here figuratively and literally. I am still not used to the English here, but I think I am quite positive about new things, so I just try it and okay, next time I will be better” (Interview 1).

This positive attitude also applied to her studies. When she observed that the classroom interaction patterns were different from the ones back in Vietnam, she said, “I told myself that at least have to say something in the classroom.” Khanh had a strong sense of her identity as an Asian in the classroom as well. She said, “Sometimes I feel like Western people speak all the time and there should be a person Asian speak and talk something.” Khanh was very motivated to learn. I observed that she was always one of the students who arrived the earliest and sat at the front.

7.3.1 Development of Verbal Participation Patterns throughout the Study

Khanh negotiated different verbal participation modes among the three courses throughout the academic year. She highly valued the importance of classroom participation and she tried hard to be active in verbal participation since the

beginning of the semester, although she reflected that she had to force herself to speak up in class. She treated it as a compulsory task in class, as she described: “I am not active but at least I say one sentence in the classroom” (Interview 2). If she did not manage to speak up in class, she would feel regret: “I regret if I did not ask. I think it will be easier if I asked. Even though it’s some stupid questions” (Interview 1). During the first weeks of her studies, Khanh was a bit overwhelmed by this new learning environment and she often compared her performance with her peers’. As I observed and Khanh reported, she was observing how other students participated in class in the first two to three weeks, and after she understood what was expected in class, she got used to the class flow.

Khanh constructed more active participation modes in the second term and became one of the most active students in her classes, achieving total integration in two of the courses in the second term and conditional participation in another course. She reflected that she was greatly influenced by her peers’ participation in different courses: “When I see them being active, I see that being active is good, it's good. And I should make it, I should do it, and I will try to be more involved” (Interview 2). In the following section, I will discuss Khanh’s different oral participation patterns and feelings in different courses.

7.3.2 Negotiation of Participation in Different Classroom Communities

Khanh was enrolled in six courses throughout the academic year, three per semester. Khanh and Mary shared three core courses as they studied the same major, but they were allocated into different seminar groups. They had completely different experiences and feelings in their seminar groups, as discussed below. Table 7-2 presents the three courses that will be discussed in looking at Khanh. I observed the first half of Research Methods in Education and the seminars for Education Enquiry during the first semester. Khanh reported the rest through interviews, emails and reflective journals. I interviewed two of Khanh’s instructors and two peers. Khanh negotiated conditional participation in the Research

Methods and Youth Studies, and total integration in Education Enquiry. Meanwhile, she achieved total integration in two of the courses in the second semester, but she was marginalised in another course. Khanh attributed the main influencing factor for her active participation to her peers. She reflected that it took her quite a while to adapt to the new learning environment in the first semester and to keep up with the reading. She was so committed to her studies that she did not make efforts to interact with peers, which made her feel lonely and stressed. She realised the importance of support from peers at the end of the first semester. In the second semester, Khanh made efforts to have more interactions with her classmates both inside and outside the classroom. She emphasised her peers' strong influence on her classroom experiences.

Courses	Research Methods in Education	Education Enquiry	Youth Studies
Demographic Information	198 students in lecture 22 students in seminar	19 students: 1 Vietnamese 18 Chinese	35 students: 1 Mexican 2 American 1 Scottish 1 Vietnamese 1 Saudi Arabian 29 Chinese
Class format	1h lecture 1h seminar	2h students' presentations	2h seminar
Participation modes	Silent observer in lecture Conditional participation in seminar	Total integration	Conditional participation

Table 7-2 Information on the three courses Khanh enrolled in

Research Methods in Education

Similar to Mary's experience in Research Methods in Education, Khanh was a silent observer in the lecture part and if she had questions, she would prefer to ask after class or bring it to the seminar and ask the tutor. First, Khanh was very conscious of others' time, saying, "I do have questions but sometimes when I feel like it's not really, really important, I will not ask it because I think I will save time for

other students' concerns" (Interview 1). Another reason Khanh cited was that she thought the size of a class played an important part in her participation: "In a smaller size, I feel comfortable. So, I don't push myself more" (Interview 1). "I am not really confident." Last but not least, Khanh expressed, "I am not really interested in the way [a certain instructor] teaches. Sometimes I don't care asking him question because I think anyway, I can find it in the book later."

Khanh reported that the atmosphere in the seminar was good. When asked about her own participation modes in the seminar, she said, "Not a lot but I was telling myself that at least I have to say something in the classroom. I do say but I don't think as often as others" (Interview 1). Khanh also observed a clear divide between the Asian and Western students: "I feel like Asian students are still very shy. Most of the time, Western students raise their voice" (Interview 1). Khanh demonstrated a strong sense of identity as an Asian:

> "It encourages me to speak more because sometimes I feel like Western people speak all the time and there should be a person Asian speak and talk something. But sometimes I also feel they also very easy questions" (Khanh, Interview 1).

Another reason that Khanh felt motivated to participate in the seminar was because of the caring tutor:

> "She is good. She even remembers my name. That's why I like. But the day when she talks about the results of assignment one, she talked about how people have the criteria and pattern of result. My face was blank, and she asked me if I am okay and I said no. I think I didn't mention what she said of the criteria. I think it's good she pays attention. She pays attention to see whether I am okay" (Interview 2).

Khanh stayed with the same group of students for the whole term: two mature Scottish teachers and two Chinese women. Khanh commented that she did not like the group allocations, as she would like to get to know the other students in the class.

> "I think for the tutorial class of course Research Methods in Education, even though everyone is so friendly and the tutor is good, but the mistake was that we always stick together to one group during the whole semester. I cannot make friends with other people" (Interview 2).

Khanh never talked in the lecture but she negotiated conditional participation in the seminar. She was not as active as her NES peers, but she was more active than other Asian peers. She stated that the interaction was limited within the groups and until the end of the term, she did not have chance to talk to other students. She felt that everyone in the class was very independent and they were not close to each other, which was very different from her experiences with classmates back in Vietnam.

Education Enquiry

Both enrolled in the same course, Education enquiry, Khanh had very different views and experiences from Mary because of different student cohort, different tutors and different classroom dynamics. As introduced above in Mary's participation patterns, the first three weeks of Education Enquiry took the form of lecture with around 80 students in a big lecture hall. From the fourth week, they were allocated into four different seminar groups held in different rooms, while Khanh and Mary were in different groups. The size of the lecture was similar to that of Research Methods in Education. Khanh had never asked any questions in the lectures for Research Methods in Education, but she asked a few questions in the Education Enquiry lectures. Khanh described the lecturer, Sandie, as "caring, helpful and passionate", which encouraged her to ask questions. She was also one of the few Asian students who asked questions in class; others would usually ask questions after class. There was usually a long queue of students after the lecture to ask Sandie questions.

Khanh was the only non-Chinese student in her seminar group. Before the seminar started, Khanh told me in a casual conversation that she wished she could be allocated into Mary's seminar group with its more diverse student cohort because

she was worried that her Chinese peers might marginalise her. However, Khanh expressed that she enjoyed her group with four Chinese women and that they were very active in group discussions. As for whole class discussions, the instructor asked one representative to speak for the group and her group took turns to represent the group. In addition, Khanh expressed that she felt free to spontaneously chime in if the representative did not cover all the points their group had discussed. However, Khanh reflected that it was difficult to make friends with her Chinese peers because they were so close to each other. It was not easy to join their group outside the classroom.

> "At first I thought I could not get along with people because I had the impression that they would prefer speak Chinese, but it's good that people in my group are very friendly and I even want to invite them to hang out with me later, but they just have close relationships to each other. It's very hard to try to do the network" (Interview 2).

Contrary to her expectations, Khanh said she enjoyed her seminar group and she no longer wished to be in Mary's because she was unsure that she would get on well with the Western peers.

> "Being Western, being white doesn't mean they may be friendlier. I just prefer the mixed group because I like the diverse culture because you know diverse culture and good relationship are two different categories. But I enjoy my current group now. I don't want to be in Sandie's group as before" (Interview 2).

Khanh enjoyed her group members, but she said that she was not happy with other peers' verbal engagement in class. Khanh discussed her feelings from the perspective of her understanding of responsibility and fairness as a member of the class. She used to think that the silent students might struggle with understanding the subject and they were unable to speak up in class. Nevertheless, she observed that the silent students gave excellent presentations and demonstrated great understanding of the subject. They were so quiet in whole class discussions that she hardly noticed their presence in class. As she commented below, she felt it was unfair for her to try hard to share ideas while the other students kept their

ideas and did not share them.

> "They are dangerous because they do not involve much, but I feel like in the class when they go through their presentation, it was good. They had detailed information, but they were just, like, invisible in the classroom and I didn't pay attention to them, but they boom. I feel like it's unfair so even though I'm not good enough I will always try to say something even though it's still…but at least I should say something. But it is just unfair when those people just stay there and listen and get all the ideas and they don't contribute of much" (Interview 2).

Based on their performances in class, Khanh reflected on her understanding of silent students and began to realise that she should not equate silence with lack of understanding or competence. The great presentations of her silent peers also made her feel a bit insecure and thus motivated her to work harder, but she still argued that it was not good to be quiet in class because she would not be able to learn from them.

> "I think it's not a good thing from what I observed from them and I think I should not do it. And one thing is that, as I told you, they are dangerous. Maybe they work harder than me and I should work harder" (Interview 2).

As one of the most active students in the class, Khanh said that it was easy for her to speak up in this class, even in whole class discussions, and she did not worry about her language usage or other students' impressions. Khanh enjoyed listening to different presentations and treated them as good sources of knowledge and information. Nonetheless, she did not like the teaching practice of her tutor because she thought that the course was only about students' presentations, but she felt she needed more critical summary from the tutor to deepen her thoughts and to check her understanding. Additionally, Khanh felt unhappy about her final mark:

> "I think I deserve better mark in the course Education Enquiry because I also spend time reading the materials and try to ask the questions and sometimes I feel like there's awkward silence in the classroom and I am trying, I am trying to help them and I am trying to engage them, but people don't count it"

(Interview 3).

Khanh felt her efforts in verbal engagement ought to be reflected in her marks because she thought her oral contribution promoted discussions. She got a B3 for this course, but she found out one of the silent students got an A5, which made her feel unfairly treated and disappointed. Khanh even questioned the necessity of her verbal engagement in class. Nevertheless, she told me a few days later that she would continue to try hard to participate in classroom activities as she had achieved a new understanding of learning:

> "I view learning as a life-long project, and I don't want to just limit it in one year and get the good grade. But by discussing, brainstorming about issues, it will be helpful in other stages of life when I work and it also about my attitude towards learning. I prefer people have small talk and discussing it, and I am thinking maybe I've got influenced from my American friends" (Interview 2).

Khanh reflected on her learning aims and adjusted her understanding and attitudes towards the results of assignments. She regained appreciation of the benefits of verbal participation.

Youth Studies

Youth Studies was an optional course for Khanh. There were 38 students in class, the majority of whom were Chinese, with two from America, one from Scotland, one from Mexico and Khanh herself from Vietnam. It was delivered through a combination of lectures, student presentations, whole class discussions and group discussions. Khanh really enjoyed the instructor's pedagogical practices. Although it was a big seminar, Khanh felt close to her peers because the instructor tried to mix the students and put them into different groups every week by organising various group activities.

> "There were around 40 students in that class, but I think it's because of the way that Miss Kerry, she makes us feel very close. She goes around the classroom and talked. She puts us into different groups every day" (Interview

1).

There was a clear evolving pattern to Khanh's verbal participation modes in this course, moving from marginal participation to conditional participation. She did not manage to achieve total integration, but she reflected that given more time, she would have. Khanh also realised her increasing participation in this course and she explained, "I think it's because I am involved much. It is like a circle. It makes me feel more confident and I am more interested in it" (Interview 2).

Khanh expressed very different feelings about this course across our three interviews. In the initial interview, Khanh found her identity in the class difficult to pin down, "something between Asian and Western":

> "Sometimes I feel I am in the middle. It's like in the room of Asia, not in a room of Chinese and I am not Chinese. They have to speak English with me but for the Western group, at first, they think that I am Chinese, so I feel like I am in the middle. It's interesting experience to me" (Interview 1).

Khanh did not feel close to the Chinese groups even though they were all Asian and shared a similar culture. She thought when Chinese students sat with her, they needed to make extra efforts to speak English with her, whereas it would be much easier for them to discuss among themselves. On the other hand, she felt she did not belong to the Western group either:

> "Sometimes I feel like I don't belong with them because of the different culture but it also depends on people. There are some people, like for some American girls; they just talk to each other because they are Americans. Sometimes I feel like I don't belong to the conversation" (Interview 1).

However, Khanh said the Scottish woman in the course was very inclusive and she was very patient to explain the Scottish culture to her and interested in Asian culture, which encouraged Khanh to share more in class. At the end of the course, she began to empathise with her active peers and to complain about the silent ones, while she had struggled to integrate with either group at the beginning of

the course. In the second interview, which was conducted after the course had finished, Khanh described her impression of the silent peers:

> "I feel like the quiet students slow down the mode, the atmosphere in the classroom, because over a long time, there were just a few people raising their voice. You will feel it's a bit awkward because I am not the one who talked too much but I feel like my other friends, they feel awkward when they feel they are just the ones who initiate to break the ice and keep talking. I hope there would be more cooperation from other people" (Interview 2).

Khanh blamed the quiet students for slowing down the pace and affecting the classroom dynamic. Rather than feeling dominated by the active peers as she did in the beginning of the course, Khanh began to appreciate their efforts to share their opinions and promote discussions. Khanh also shared an unhappy experience with a group of quiet students, as she described:

> "I think at least they should show their cooperation better than just sitting quiet, because it's very hard. There was a time in Youth Studies that I'm in a group with all Chinese students and they don't say anything, and I'm not good at that topic too but I want to ask them to brainstorm some general ideas, but they just keep quiet. So, it's very hard work if you are the only one talking and no one responds to your idea" (Interview 2).

Khanh empathised with the instructor's challenges, too. She acknowledged the efforts that the instructors made to engage the students. Khanh described her observation of the instructor's teaching practice:

> "I know it's hard for her because most of students are quiet and she even goes around and ask somebody who was not engaged in the discussion and she asked that person to present. So, it's good, she makes effort to involve people and the class is much more about brainstorming, discussing, analysing issues" (Interview 2).

Khanh appreciated the contributions made by her peers and instructors, which encouraged her verbal participation. She commented that although she was not the most active student, she made efforts to talk in class. She felt proud of her volunteering to make a presentation on a topic that she was interested in. However,

she felt she still needed to wait to talk until her more active peers had “broken the ice”. Khanh felt that given a couple more weeks, she would have become one of the more active students.

7.3.3 Summary of Khanh’s Negotiation of Participation throughout the Academic Year

Based on Khanh’s comments and narratives of her experiences, it can be seen that her peers - especially her group members - had a great influence on her negotiation of participation and identities within different classroom communities. It was negotiation of membership, competence and power, and all these factors interplayed with each other. In what follows, I compare and contrast Khanh’s experiences in different communities to highlight the influencing factors in different contexts.

The negotiation of her image as a competent member in the community greatly influenced Khanh’s development of different participation patterns in Education Enquiry and Youth Studies. Comparing Khanh’s performances in these two courses in the first semester, she was more active in Education Enquiry although she was more interested in the subject of Youth Studies and she also preferred Youth Studies’ diverse student cohort. Khanh constructed her image as a fluent English user and active verbal participant in Education Enquiry because it was a community full of non-native English-speaking international students, most of whom were quiet. Khanh felt more encouraged to speak in front of her peers when English was not their native language. Although she was motivated to talk more by her more active peers in Youth Studies, she did not achieve the same level of security as she did in Education Enquiry. Additionally, she made extra efforts to negotiate her Asian identity, attempting to prove to her Western peers that she was a competent Asian learner.

The negotiation of membership and power played an important part in Khanh’s

different behaviours and feelings in Education Enquiry and Research Methods in Education. Nevertheless, she achieved total integration in Education Enquiry and only marginal interaction in Research Methods in Education. In Education Enquiry, she negotiated a sense of belonging in her group, where her group members were all very cooperative and inclusive. However, in Research Methods in Education, her group members were not as supportive as those in Education Enquiry and they sometimes spoke in Mandarin with each other, which made Khanh feel excluded. When Chinese students were the dominant group, it was challenging for Khanh to negotiate her membership and power in the community.

Peer relations were another factor that affected Khanh's classroom performances. A general comparison of Khanh's participation modes and feelings between semester one and semester two show that Khanh achieved more active participation patterns in the second semester when she had more interactions with her peers. In the first semester, Khanh reported limited interactions with her peers and she commented, "Even though we are in the same major, we don't study the same courses. Somehow I don't meet them" (Interview 2). She found it difficult to build a rapport with other students and she did not recognise the value of peer support: "I don't think they can help me. I think that people are just in a very short time relationship and it's hard to rely on anybody. Cause I know people would be busy" (Interview 2). Meanwhile, in the second semester when she built closer relationships with her peers, Khanh commented, "I feel like when we spend more time talking together, I will be more excited, because you know when we discuss, we have more voices; we come up with many ideas together" (Interview 3).

As Khanh became more active in the second semester, she constructed her identity as a member of the active native English-speaking students and distanced herself from the silent Asian group. She usually sat in the same group with native English-speaking peers and active Asian students to have discussions. Although Khanh complained about always being in a group with the same students in the first semester, she stopped complaining about this in the second semester when she

was happy with her group members, and she was even unhappy when the instructor tried to rearrange the groups.

7.4 Summary

In conclusion, treating the classroom as a community of practice, this chapter has compared and contrasted the focal students' participatory opportunities, peer relations, and roles in six different communities of practice to unfold their different learning and participation trajectories in different communities. Grounded in the conceptual framework of communities of practice, these two participants' negotiations of participation in different courses could be interpreted from the perspective of negotiating identities, competence, membership and power. Lave and Wenger (1991, p.53) argue that learning is "an evolving form of membership" and that individuals construct and develop their identities as they "change in how they participate in a Community of Practice through the multiple social relations and roles they experience".

Mary and Khanh negotiated different identities and participation patterns in different classroom communities and in different ways. The classroom communities had reciprocal relationships with the development of participation modes and identities. Different community climates were created in different courses and different peer relations and roles were constructed. For example, the Adult Education course that Mary took in the second semester developed into a supportive group where the students knew each other's names and invited each other's participation, which in turn helped Mary negotiate total integration. In contrast, Mary was marginalised in Education Enquiry, where her native English-speaking peers dominated the discussion. Additionally, the nature of the class also affected students' participation. Both Mary and Khanh were silent observers in the lectures for Research Methods in Education, where verbal participation was less expected than in seminars. These variations demonstrate that it is crucial to interpret participants' participation contextually instead of discussing their

competence and patterns as if they were static.

There was a clear interplay between identity and participation negotiation. The participation patterns shaped the student's identities in the class and the identities in the class affected how they participated in class activities. For example, Khanh felt it was like a "cycle" because the more she spoke in class, the more confident she felt. She negotiated her identity as a competent Asian student in Youth Studies and thus she felt it became easier to talk. In contrast, Mary felt inferior to her native English-speaking peers in the seminar of Education Enquiry because she could not express herself with fluent English, and she was therefore marginalised in her verbal participation. Additionally, Mary and Khanh developed different interpretations of their active peers. Mary felt motivated by her active peers and became a member of their group. However, Mary felt dominated and was marginalised. Their different participation patterns also led to their having different roles in class. Khanh took "increasingly responsible roles" (Haneda, 2006) as she acquired increased knowledge and skills required to participate in verbal activities. In contrast, Mary tried to avoid sitting with native English-speaking peers, instead letting them discuss among themselves. In the next chapter, I will discuss how the silent observers negotiated their identities and feelings in different classroom communities.

Chapter 8 The Voices behind the Silence

8.1 Overview

The silence of international students in the overseas classroom has been identified in many previous studies, as discussed in Chapter Four. Researchers tend to explain this issue from the theoretical perspectives of intercultural communication and discourse socialisation. However, the current study conducts a context-oriented analysis of students' classroom experience and argues that silence is not as static as it seems. Behind students' quiet and almost invisible presence in the class, they have very rich and complex perspectives and feelings. This chapter examines the concept of silence as a fluid and socially situated phenomenon and presents the voices behind the silence by discussing three cases in detail: Farah, Qiang and Haijun. The findings present different types of silences: 'proactive' and 'reluctant', and various inter-connected factors that make students reticent to speak up in class. These case studies also present the "co-constructed nature of silence" (Morita, 2002, p. 133) as the same students negotiated different types of silence in different contexts or at different stages of the academic year, in response to classroom environments and their own and others' ways of understanding the role of silence in learning. Subject-specific influences on students' verbal engagement were also identified.

8.2 The Case of Farah: Reluctant Silence Imposed by Peers and Instructors

Farah, a 27-year-old Indonesian student, came to pursue her master's degree in International Communication Studies, the same programme as Haijun. Before her postgraduate studies, she worked in a radio station in Indonesia for six years, acting as programme editor for 3 years and then being promoted to be the manager of an independent programme. Farah had been to a few European countries for short-term business visits, but this was her first time studying abroad. Farah did the same major for her bachelor's degree and she graduated with

Distinction. She described herself as one of the top students during her undergraduate studies, and she had close relationship with both her classmates and instructors. However, she stated that she was not used to asking questions or discussion activities in class due to the educational system and pedagogical conventions back home:

> "The culture back home, we rarely have discussions. We don't have seminar, like it's very small amount of time that we spent on discussion. It's just like teaching, teaching and teaching; it's just one direction from the teacher to student but here no, you have to, like, keep taking back and forth, the student and teacher, the student and the teacher" (Interview 2).

Farah demonstrated strong motivation to study in the new learning environment: "I gave up my job to study here. I hope I can expand my horizons and make the best of it" (Interview 1). She observed how her peers spoke up in class and she was very impressed with their active verbal participation. Farah told me from the first interview that she would like to become a member of the active students and she made great efforts to act like her peers. She did become a member of the active students in the majority of her courses, except in two optional courses: Internet Communications and Politics and Democracy, which Haijun also found it difficult to participate in. Farah's experience in these two optional courses illustrated the reluctant silence created in interaction with peers and pedagogical practices. The following two sections discuss the two main factors that led to Farah's reluctant silence in these two courses: negotiation of membership and pedagogical influences.

8.2.1 Negotiation of Membership

There were around 30 students in Politics and Democracy, the majority of whom were native English-speakers. The classroom atmosphere was always dynamic, but both Haijun and Farah were usually silent. Farah was not integrated in this course and the first impression she had of Politics and Democracy was that outspoken native English-speaking students dominated the course. Farah felt she was not

able to keep up with her peers and that she was inferior to them when she compared her own oral contributions with theirs:

> "I feel stupid sometimes. I feel like, why people are asking questions and say what in their mind, and why I am just sitting here and say nothing" (Interview 1).

Farah felt that she did not belong to the competent student group, which was mainly due to her insufficient knowledge of politics, and she could not achieve in-depth discussion with her peers. Farah mentioned very often in the interviews that she struggled to understand the discussion topics and she did not feel she could join in the discussion within a short period of time:

> "When the lecturer asked this and that and people started to talk and I was like, 'What is this?' It's because politics is not something that I can study in three weeks. It takes long time to understand. It takes some time to be in the situation, to understand the pattern of politics because it's really complicated. Not matter how many books I read about politics, I cannot immediately understand it in two or three weeks (Interview 1).

Farah attributed great importance to the role of reading and her knowledge of the subject. She valued knowledge of subject over English proficiency, saying, "It's useless if I can speak English fluently, but then if I don't understand the topic, the response would be rubbish" (Interview 2).

In Farah's view, another reason she did not belong in this course was her peers' reactions to her silence. She did not find any sense of participatory legitimacy within this course. She felt her peers were indifferent to her silence and she did not want to break their discussion flow. Politics and Democracy was an optional course for her, while the majority of the students were from another major and they had courses together more often. Farah said that her peers were passionate in their discussions and sometimes the discussion went back and forth among them so fast that she could not follow it. They would not invite her opinions if she remained silent. Farah had a hard time negotiating the reluctant silence. She said,

"I was so upset in that class. I couldn't say anything" (Interview 3). As endorsed by the concept 'legitimate periphery participation', the recognition and support from the 'old comers' and 'experts' are crucial for the newcomers to build their legitimacy from peripheral participation and move towards full participation. Farah was eager to achieve full participation but her marginalised experiences in this course caused her to lose her sense of participatory legitimacy.

8.2.2 Instructors' Awareness of International Students' Difficulties

Another course that Farah found challenging to participate in was Internet Communications. This was an optional course for her major and it had a similar student cohort to that of International Communications. Farah was not completely silent in this course and she asked the lecturer questions a couple of times. However, she told me that those questions were prepared before class just so she could say something. She did not manage to achieve in-depth discussions as she expected. Farah attributed this to two main factors: insufficient knowledge and voices not heard by the instructor. Farah described that although the course was titled Internet Communication, it was closely related to politics, which she found she lacked the knowledge to discuss. Another crucial factor was the lecturer. First, Farah felt the lecturer had little awareness of international students' difficulties and he spoke very fast:

> "The teacher from America, he speaks really fast and he assumes everybody understands what he said so he never controlled his speed and sometimes we were like, 'What was that? What was that?'" (Interview 3).

This opinion was echoed by Haijun, who took the same course. They both found that the instructor spoke so fast that they could not understand him well. However, what Farah found disappointing was that she approached the lecturer once to express her difficulties understanding him, and although the lecturer acknowledged her request that he speak more clearly, he did not slow down his speaking speed in subsequent lectures. Nevertheless, Farah still found him helpful

as he helped her with her understanding of assignments and was responsive to her emails. Moreover, Farah felt a lack of connection with the instructor because this was her optional course and she was not a member of the instructor's subject group:

> "The teacher is very nice, like he is very helpful, but he is Politics teacher. There's still some barrier because I am not his student, you know, this is my optional class. The connection is different, but he is a very nice teacher" (Interview 3).

This factor was closely related to the affective factor that Farah felt she did not get enough attention like she did from her core course instructors. It also affected her motivation to speak up in class. On the other hand, it was also linked to her negotiation of membership within the course. Farah's silence demonstrated the effects of membership in class as well as instructors' awareness of international students' difficulties.

8.3 The Case of Qiang: Silence as a Proactive Choice of Participation Pattern

Qiang was from China and was 24 years old. He was enrolled in the postgraduate taught course in Finance in the Department of Business. Qiang had never been abroad before and coming abroad to study was a sudden decision after he failed his entrance exam to do his master's degree in China. Qiang's Bachelor's degree was in Accounting and he subsequently worked in a bank for a year. There were around 300 students in his programme, more than 290 of whom were from China, which is consistent with Yu and Moskal' s (2019) research findings that it is a common phenomenon to have a large number of international students in the Department of Business, the majority of whom are Chinese. Qiang was completely silent throughout the whole academic year in both lectures and tutorials; however, he was an attentive listener and usually sat at the front listening to the lecturer carefully and taking notes. Qiang's case demonstrated the influences of the nature of the subject and suggested silence as pedagogy.

8.3.1 Influences of the Nature of the Subject and Programme

The large number of students in the Finance programme meant that most of the courses were lecture-orientated. In one compulsory course, all the students sat together in a lecture hall; students sitting at the back could not even see the lecturer properly but were assisted by two big screens displaying the lecture slides. Qiang said that there were hardly eye contact or interactions with the lecturer and he felt it was more like a speech by an invited lecturer than an academic class. Another core course, International Accounting (IA), had around 150 students because the lecturer, Achilles, was concerned about the quality of the classes if there were too many students, so he split them into two groups. In addition, there were also four tutorial sessions to highlight some important teaching points, which were of a much smaller size, with around 20 students in each tutorial. Qiang also chose an optional course, International Finance (IF), which had another four tutorial sessions. I observed IA and IF, including the tutorials. Qiang's experience in the IA was analysed to present the characteristics of his programme and how it was connected to his classroom reticence. Meanwhile, a comparison of Qiang's experience and feelings in the tutorials for IA and IF reveal his conception of silence as "his way of participation".

One reason for Qiang's silence in International Accounting was because of the large size of the class. There were some whole-classroom discussions when the lecturer Achilles encouraged students to ask questions or when he posed a question to the class, but Qiang said, "Speaking in front such a large group of students attracted too much attention from my classmates and lecturer" (Interview 1). Qiang also commented that even if the course had been in Mandarin, he might not have felt comfortable speaking in front of such a large group. According to my observation of Qiang's behaviour in this course, he only asked questions once in front of the whole classroom but he was active in asking questions during the breaks. Qiang told me when he went to ask questions during the break, the lecturer always encouraged him to ask questions in class, saying his questions were very good and

could benefit other students. However, Qiang never spoke up in class. He said, “I don’t think I can explain my question well with so much attention in class. And I don’t want to waste others’ time”. Regarding the large size of the class, the lecturer Achilles explained:

> “Given the number of students enrolled, we have room constraint. Ideally, we would come in four groups but it's not possible at the moment. For next year, I would try to have the third hour to be in smaller groups”.

The drawbacks of the large size class have drawn the lecturer’s attention and he plans to make efforts to makes changes for new students in future.

Interrelated with the large size of class, the lecture-orientated nature of this course made interactions less expected compared with other sociological and educational courses observed where discussions would promote the progress of class. According to Qiang’s understanding, “The nature of accounting is to give the correct results and I do not see the meaning of discussion” (Interview during class breaks). Qiang commented that his opinion on the non-importance of discussions also informed his behaviour in the smaller size tutorials. The tutorial was obviously more interactive than the lecture, but Qiang was still a bit quiet in the tutorial. He did not take any initiative to join in the discussion, but once he was called on for an answer by the tutor Khalid. I observed that Khalid made great efforts to get everyone engaged by inviting students randomly to answer his questions. I was also invited by him to answer a question when he did not recognise me as the observer. I said I was sorry that I did not know; he said that was a great answer too. Khalid always gave positive and encouraging feedbacks. Qiang gave a wrong answer to Khalid's question, but Khalid did not say it was wrong. Instead, Khalid explained the principles once again and let the students think about it. I interviewed Qiang after class about his impressions of this tutorial. He did feel more relaxed and less pressured to speak up in the seminars, but he did not see the necessity of discussions in the tutorials:

> "It was not a difficult question. I could figure it out myself without attending the tutorials. There were answers anyway to the question uploaded to Moodle. I still don't see the necessity of discussions".

There were four seminar sessions but Qiang only attended two of them. He did not appreciate the class design of the tutorials. His comments were consistent with the lecturer Achilles' impressions of international students' learning style:

> "I think international students are keen on knowing the answer rather than how you get to the right answer. Well, for me, I would be more interested them to engage with what is the process for solving a problem" (Achilles).

The dominance of mono-ethnic students (Chinese) did not help the class interactions within the programme. Chinese students seemed like host students while the students from other countries and even British students seemed like visitors. Once Qiang told me he was very unhappy with his Chinese peers' behaviour in class when they laughed at one Indian student's strong accent. He described that the Indian student asked a very good question, but the lecturer did not hear him clearly and asked him to repeat it. The large group of Chinese students all laughed. Qiang commented:

> "I don't think they have the right to laugh at this Indian student just because of his accent. They speak more fluent English than us. Everybody has a different accent. Shame!" (Interview 1).

Qiang felt that a more diverse student cohort would motivate his classroom participation, which was the same as Haijun's experience in International History, where his peers were mostly Chinese students.

8.3.2 "Silence as my way of participation"

Kim et al. (2016) argue that verbal participation is not the sole form of engaged learning and active participation, and that silence can also be treated as a form of participation. Qiang argued throughout the study that silence is "my way of participation". As introduced in the beginning, even though Qiang was quiet

verbally, he was mentally engaged in class, which could be seen from his expressions and gestures. The silence that Qiang negotiated was proactive silence; he did not feel obliged to speak up and it did not affect his learning. Therefore, Qiang did not understand silence in a class as a problem. He had his own understanding of a good lesson when he compared his experience in the two tutorials, as described below.

I observed Qiang's classroom behaviours in two different tutorials: IA and IF. The classroom atmosphere of the IA tutorial was more dynamic than that of IF. More students asked questions in IA. Being immersed in both tutorials, I felt more relaxed in IA because of Khalid's teaching style, while in IF, I felt nervous even as an observer, because when nobody answered the tutor's questions, the tutor, Eanraig, would say, "Hello, are you still here? Are you sleeping?" or "How can you come to class without reading the materials?" Qiang remained silent in both tutorials most of the time. Nonetheless, he told me he preferred Eanraig's tutorial to Khalid's, since his criterion for a good lesson was the structure of the content rather than an interactive format. He thought Eanraig's tutorial was well organised and structured. In contrast, although Khalid's tutorial was more dynamic, Qiang did not feel that he gained anything from the open discussions.

Qiang achieved a Merit based on his final average grades. He also got an A1 for a group project, the highest mark possible in his department. Although Qiang did not participate verbally in class, he demonstrated good understanding of the teaching content and assignments. He said, "I focus more on the result than on the process. I know clearly what I want." He had no doubt of himself as a "competent learner". He explained he would not treat himself as a student anymore but as a fast learner. He understood that he had strong independent learning skills:

> "I might be slow in the beginning but it's because I always have deep thinking about questions. It will be stuck in my head after I figure it out on my own. I will be confused if I learn by discussing with others" (Interview 3).

As Qiang put it himself, silence was his way of participating and learning. Silence allowed him to process the information and think further, and for his purposes, discussion was not useful. Although Qiang did not participate verbally in class, he demonstrated good understanding of the teaching content and assignment.

8.4 The Case of Haijun: Negotiating Proactive and Reluctant Silence in Different Courses

Haijun was 26 years old and was from China. He came to pursue his master's degree in International Communication Studies, the same programme as Farah studied in. It was the first time for Haijun to study and live in a foreign country. Before he came to study, he worked as a documentary editor for three years in one of the best companies in China. He said that he was the top student during his bachelor's studies and he also found a more prestigious job than his undergraduate peers. There were 21 students in Haijun's subject at the beginning. The majority of these students were Chinese, and there were four British and one Indonesian student. However, two British students quit the subject and changed to a different one, which I will explain further in the following section. The students had two compulsory courses and one optional course each semester. They attended these courses together most of the time, but Haijun did not feel a sense of community with his classmates. The study of Haijun's case presents his negotiation of both proactive and reluctant silence as well as two themes leading to his silence: misinterpretation of international students' silence and a mismatch between his identities in the new learning environment and back in his home country.

8.4.1 Misinterpretation of Silence

The research findings revealed different conceptualisations of silence among different classroom members. As discussed in Chapter Six, compared with the focal participants, their native English-speaking peers attributed greater

significance to oral participation in classroom activities. Most of the peers interviewed regarded oral participation as such an essential part of the learning process that they expressed some misinterpretations of international students' silence. Some peers attributed international students' silence to a lack of preparation, insufficient knowledge and disengagement. Conflicts and tension existed in some classroom communities, which affected their interactions and relationship within the class. In some extreme cases, they blamed each other for the inactive atmosphere or learning inefficiency. Haijun's experience in his International History course presented the effects of different conceptualisations and expectations of classroom interaction patterns and it showed how international students' silence was perceived by native English-speaking peers. Haijun negotiated proactive silence in this course, although it was also accompanied with some reluctant feelings as explained below.

International History one of the core courses for Haijun's programme, took the form of seminar. A common observation of the class was the silence of most of the Chinese students, while the rest had more interactions with the instructor. Haijun negotiated proactive silence in this course and developed different perceptions of verbal participation at different stages. He was not completely silent in classroom activities and he spoke more during group discussions. He reported that he was eager to speak up in the whole class discussions in the beginning when he was impressed by the interactive modes of class in the new learning context. He said, "It helps to build up my confidence" (Interview 1). He observed that his English proficiency was above average for the Chinese students, which made him more confident to speak in this class. However, as time passed, he said he lost the motivation to speak up because he did not like the discussion questions. He did not find any in-depth discussions and he did not see the importance of oral participation:

> "I only feel motivated or inspired to speak up when someone comes up with original and in-depth ideas. I have not met any students like this yet in this class. I only participate when I feel my opinions will contribute to the teaching

content and may benefit other students" (Interview 1).

Haijun did not like speaking up for the sake of drawing attention or just making some noise in class. He felt the discussion was normally at a superficial level. While he withdrew from verbal participation, he remained calm and comfortable being in the class. Haijun's proactive silence in this course demonstrated his perception and value of verbal participation. It was also as his strategy to resist discussions on "superficial questions" or talking for the sake of making his presence in class.

However, different opinions were heard from Haijun's British peer, Tracy, who treated verbal participation as an essential part of the learning process because "The participation part of the seminar is when the information really sticks in your head". Unfortunately, Tracy dropped out the course as she found it difficult to learn in such a classroom atmosphere:

> "There was no dialogue, there was no participation in the seminars. It made me feel very unhappy and I had to change because I didn't feel I was getting much out of the classes because everybody was quiet".

Nevertheless, Tracy told me that it was a difficult decision for her, and she felt sorry for the international students because she sympathised with their learning difficulties. Tracy associated international students' silence with "insufficient background knowledge" of the subject, "language barrier" and "not [being] prepared for subsequent discussions". Haijun told me that he understood Tracy's decision to drop the seminar. However, he felt that Chinese students were looked down upon:

> "I think she must think communicating with people from other countries is more important. They chose to leave. It's their choice. I think more or less that Chinese students are discriminated against overseas. It's not because of what we did but just because of the big population of Chinese students. Of course, they will not say anything rude or offensive, but you can feel they try to avoid you" (Haijun, Interview 2).

Participants' perceptions of classroom participation have significant influence on their classroom performances and efforts to speak up (Guo & Chase, 2011). Haijun and Tracy held different attitude towards verbal participation and they also demonstrated different participation modes. Haijun was confident in his knowledge of the subject, but he did not see verbal participation as crucial to his learning. However, Tracy found it unacceptable to have such a quiet class and she interpreted the reticence of international students as being caused by a lack of background knowledge and the language barrier. Although Haijun did not take Tracy's dropping of the seminar personally, his feeling of being excluded as a member of the Chinese group was reinforced even when Chinese students formed the majority in the class. There was a lack of mutual understanding and communication among different community members. They both gave up making efforts to contribute to verbal discussions.

8.4.2 Disparities between Identities in the New Environment and Back Home

Students' adaptation to the new learning context is the negotiation of both previous and current experience. They come with an identity constructed in their home country, and when they encounter different socio-cultural environment, there might be conflicts with their previous self-perception, beliefs and/or values (Morita, 2004). The process of constructing and reconstructing their identities in the intercultural classroom is a negotiation of their competence, cultures and power relations (Duff, 2010). It takes time and effort for students to adapt. Haijun had a depressing period of time at the beginning of the semester due to the mismatch between his identities in this new learning environment and back in China, which was closely related to his communicative competence and concerns over his image in his peers' and instructions' eyes. Haijun compared his general feelings of his communicative competence in Mandarin and in English:

> "When I was in China, my colleague called me "fox" because I am good at socialising. My communicative competence was good, and I usually can leave a good impression on people after a conversation. But here, I am not sure of

> my use of words. For example, a peer stopped talking to me after we talked about some political issues between China and her country. I am more careful about what I say now due to different cultures and potential misinterpretations" (Interview 2).

Haijun's sense of identity as a student was closely related to his English proficiency, which affected his verbal communications, listening comprehension and self-perception. This discussion of Haijun's reluctant silence examines the mismatch of his identities in relation to the linguistic factors.

Haijun thought the language barrier was the cause of all his learning challenges as it represented his identity and determined others' impressions of him. Haijun's experience in one optional course in Politics and Democracy demonstrated his negotiation of reluctant silence. As described in Farah's case, there were around 30 students in this class, the majority of whom were native English-speakers. The classroom atmosphere was always dynamic. His native English-speaking peers always had a lot to talk about and sometimes they debated among themselves. Haijun showed a strong desire to participate and he was impressed by the depth and quality of his peers' questions and comments. However, he said he only negotiated reluctant silence: "It's not that I don't want to participate but I don't have a space to talk. Everyone talks very fluently and fast" (Interview 2).

First, Haijun found a disparity between his status in the postgraduate course and in his bachelor's studies. He lost his labels as "top student", "competent" and "outstanding", and he did not have special attention from his peers or instructors anymore. In contrast, he thought they hardly noticed his existence in class due to his lack of classroom participation. Haijun described his different feelings:

> "During my Bachelor's, I think I can use 'outstanding' to describe myself. So, there is a big gap when I come here. I was a very competent student in both peers' and lecturers' eyes. Even my lecturers wanted to catch up with me after class. However, I don't think my lecturers here would have any impression of me. I think their impressions of students should be based on in-class performance since our essay is marked anonymously. But I don't have much verbal participation in class. I think none of the lecturers would have

any impression of me" (Interview 2).

Second, the reactions of Haijun's peers to his silence reinforced his reticence in this course. Haijun shared his experience of being excluded from a group discussion once when they talked about the election of American president. Haijun commented that although he could understand their reactions and found them reasonable, he still felt depressed and frustrated at not being able to join their discussion.

> "Once, I was assigned to a group with all English-speaking students. During the whole discussion, they totally ignored me. Five people in the group, they didn't… if I were in their position, I would ask the quiet members' opinions even though I can understand they had a very in-depth discussion of the issue and they may not bother to waste their time on me, whose English is not fluent and might take up some time to express myself. I even gave up attempting to join in. I am not complaining about their attitude. Instead, I feel it's reasonable, though I feel discarded and frustrated. I can totally understand and will not be angry or mad at them, since I know it's my problem" (Interview 2)

However, Haijun also had experiences in a group with more inclusive peers, and although he did manage to say something, he said it was very slow and he still felt frustrated at not being able to discuss the topic further with his peers. In addition, he was not sure whether they understood him or not. When Haijun was assigned to a group with more inclusive group members, he felt cared for and supported. He made efforts to express his opinions:

> "The peers are very nice and inclusive. They asked for my opinions. If they ask me, I would say something, although very slowly. If they don't ask me, I cannot join their conversation at all. I feel depressed when I am interested in a topic, but my language cannot keep up with my thoughts. If they allowed me to answer in Mandarin, I would have some in-depth discussion, too" (Interview 2).

Third, Haijun found it difficult to follow the teaching content. He reported that at the beginning of the term, he could only understand half of the teaching content at most. Sometimes he did not even know what the discussion question

was, and he could not find the connections between some peers' answers and the lecturer's questions. He would then think he did not understand the questions correctly and consider it fortunate that he did not answer them.

> "Especially in the first three lessons, I couldn't understand the teaching content at all, even the reading was so difficult to understand. It was so depressing. I have never experienced this kind of feeling before. You cannot join others' discussion and you don't know what they are talking about" (Interview 2).

Haijun reflected that he usually felt lost in class due to his limited listening comprehension, especially when his peers or instructors spoke very fast or had very strong accents. Haijun confessed that he was also concerned about damaging his image if he could not give a good answer to the question. He said he would rather keep silent than give a wrong answer:

> "If you gave an answer that was off-track, it could cause disagreement with the instructor and damage your image in your peers' eyes. I was worried about whether my answer was too superficial. And then the teacher may say, 'That's very interesting,' and then my peers would know my answer was not good" (Interview 2).

Haijun's reluctant silence in Politics and Democracy demonstrated the influence of linguistic factors and disparities of identities and self-perceptions on his verbal participation modes. These three factors were closely interrelated and mutually affected one another. The identity disparities he experienced in the transition made him reticent to communicate with others, while his self-perception of his communicative competence in English made him construct a self-image of being less competent than his peers. In addition, being unable to fully understand the teaching content made him unsure of himself.

In summary, Haijun's proactive silence in International History and reluctant silence in Politics and Democracy revealed the negotiation of different conceptions, competence and self-image. Haijun held different attitudes towards classroom participation in different courses when he was with different peers.

When he was with mostly Chinese students in International History, he did not see the meaning of interactions, but when he was with peers from more diverse backgrounds in Politics and Democracy, he had strong motivation to participate. Ironically, when he felt oral participation was not important in International History, he felt confident and comfortable speaking up because his self-perception was that his competence and knowledge were stronger than his peers; however, when he was eager to participate, he found it challenging to do so in front of native English-speaking and more experienced peers. Consistent with previous research findings (Duff, 2010; Ha & Li, 2014; Kim et al., 2016; Morita, 2004; Schultz, 2012; Tatar, 2005; Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015; Zhou et al., 2005), English proficiency played an important role in Haijun's verbal participation, which was closely related to the mismatch between his identity in the new learning environment and his identity in China. However, the different origin and nature of his silence in different courses demonstrate that silence is not necessarily an essentialised aspect of a given student.

8.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed international students' silence within intercultural classrooms. Proactive and reluctant silence were distinguished to explore the participants' negotiation of identities and power in the context examined. This chapter has revealed the tensions between international students and their peers in the classroom, resulting from different expectations and perceptions of classroom participation. It has presented the different conceptualisations and misinterpretations of silence, suggesting that silence does not mean lack of knowledge, disengagement or incompetence. Comparing and contrasting the selected participants' experiences in their courses, I have explained their different socialisation processes by mapping out factors that led to their silence and that promoted their participation from the perspective of communities of practice. Consistent with previous research, my findings indicate that linguistic factors or communicative competence greatly affected the students' classroom

reticence. However, it is important to discuss the influence in context and link it to the influence of other factors like participants' negotiation of membership and perception. International students' silence was closely related to their membership in the classroom community. Some students chose to remain silent in discussions because they felt marginalised by their native English-speaking peers and they did not feel there was space or time left for them. A common comment on their native English-speaking peers' classroom participation was that their classroom participation was dominant and intimidating due to various factors. Some students felt challenged by their fluency and eloquence in English, while others were overwhelmed by their rich knowledge of the subject. Their membership in the classroom communities had a reciprocal relationship with the development of their participation modes.

Fostering an appreciation of diversity in the classroom requires the open exchange of ideas and experiences of students from different backgrounds (Zhou et al., 2005, p. 307). Mutual understanding among students should be encouraged to promote cooperative learning. Hollander (2002) defines classroom participation as a collective responsibility of the class rather than just an individual responsibility. It is neither international students' responsibility to adapt to the new learning environment nor their peers' or instructors' obligation to compromise. It should be an interactive and mutually inclusive process. It is important to promote an appreciation of diversity in the classroom community to legitimise different participation modes. Ha and Li (2014, p.245) argue for "the need to optimise silence as pedagogy" to recognise learning diversity rather than to compromise for "a shared behaviour". This is not to encourage students to keep silent, but rather to remove the misunderstanding and negative stereotypes of silence as non-participation or passive learning. To facilitate the formation of a positive classroom atmosphere, more interactions, both inside and outside the classroom, should be encouraged and arranged to help students get to know each other and thus develop a sense of community. Zhou et al. (2005) argue that familiarity with peers and instructors can contribute to "sense of safety" and "sense of belonging".

When international students feel they are members of the class and their ideas are welcomed, they make extra efforts to contribute to the discussion.

Chapter 9 Discussion and Conclusion

9.1 Overview

This chapter moves beyond the factual and interpretative analysis (Trafford & Leshem, 2008) presented in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight to bring in the conceptual discussions of L2 international students' classroom participation at a UK university. Section 9.2 readdresses the research questions posed in Chapter One and recapitulates the main findings with reference to the existing literature. Section 9.3 considers theoretical interpretations, limitations and contributions of the thesis. Section 9.4 presents the pedagogical implications for course instructors and university institutions and provides practical suggestions for L2 international students and their peers. Section 9.5 and 9.6 reflect on the limitations of this study and on my personal and professional development throughout the PhD journey. Finally, section 9.7 concludes the thesis and provides implications for anyone who is in a similar context as a basis for reflection on practice.

9.2 Contribution to the Substantive Literature on International Students' Classroom Participation

This study has investigated L2 international students' participation in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms at a UK university and has focused on the focal international students' negotiation of verbal participation, using ethnographically-informed case studies to closely examine their feelings and perceptions of participation issues as well as their native English-speaking student peers' and instructors' views and attitudes. It has revealed influencing factors, various participation patterns and some of the conflicting tensions in the classroom. This section reviews the main research findings to address the research questions posed in Chapter One, and it discusses this thesis' contribution to the substantive literature on L2 international students' classroom participation.

9.2.1 How do individual L2 international students negotiate their classroom participation patterns in different learning environments?

The international students' participation in the new learning environment was a negotiation of a range of interrelated individual and contextual factors. None of these factors, however, single-handedly played a deterministic role in students' verbal participation. Rather, the factors were interconnected. Chapter Six has provided a detailed account of how the focal participants actively interacted with five general categories of influencing factors (Liu, 2002): cognitive, pedagogical, sociocultural, linguistic and affective factors. I will not repeat the influences of each factor in this section but rather relate the findings to the existing research literature to emphasise nuanced findings and the contribution.

The linguistic factor played an important part in students' verbal participation in class; all the students mentioned it in their interviews or reflective journals. Lee (2007) argues that language has a dominant influence on students' participation but Morita (2004) claims it does not guarantee full participation in classroom, citing the example of one of her participants whose mother tongue was Japanese, but who remained silent in a course delivered in Japanese. Similarly, I did not find that language had a dominant influence among the 10 participants. The students did mention that linguistic competence affected their confidence to speak up, but the same students' different performances in different classes contradicted this argument, as the same student would behave similarly in different contexts. In addition, while students talked about the influence of their language proficiency on speaking up in the classroom, they emphasised the significance of their peers' and instructors' reactions, which encouraged or hindered their subsequent classroom participation. A prevailing complaint from students was lack of time and space for them to contribute verbally as they sensed impatience and indifference in others' reactions. This finding corresponds with Valdez's (2015) study of 15 Chinese international students at an American university who complained about a lack of time and space to contribute to the discussion. The linguistic factor was

interrelated with sociocultural and contextual factors in affecting students' verbal participation. Singling it out would lead to the oversimplification of its influences.

Contrary to the prevailing emphasis on the significant influence of culture on students' classroom participation and studies, this study identified the changing role of culture within the classroom and its different roles outside the classroom. At the beginning of their studies, the participants talked more about different 'cultural scripts of learning' and about how they affected their participation patterns. As time passed, they demonstrated an understanding of the new classroom culture and talked less about the influence of their background cultures. For example, in the first interview, Alisa talked about the structured and teacher-centred teaching style back in Russia and about how it shaped her classroom participation modes. However, in later interviews she reflected that her cultural background did not play a deterministic role in her ways of joining in the discussions, but it more related to her knowledge of the subject and how valuable a contribution she felt she could make. In addition, the cross-case analysis of the 10 participants' classroom participation patterns show not only that students from different cultures have diverse cultural scripts (Welikala & Watkin, 2008) but they also had very different ways of negotiating participation patterns between their previous learning habits and the new classroom that did not relate to their cultural backgrounds. For example, three participants from China - Qinyi, Qiang and Haijun, demonstrated varied classroom participation and adjustment patterns depending on other influential factors other than their cultural scripts of learning.

The research findings on participants' social interactions with peers outside the classroom reflected the findings of existing studies showing that cultural differences hinder integration and socialisation outside the classroom (Gu, Schweisfurth & Day, 2009). There was a common comment among the participants that it was difficult to socialise with peers outside the classroom due to cultural differences and linguistic issues. Haijun found it difficult to understand Western jokes, while Farah identified constraints rooted in her religious beliefs and

customs.

Negotiation of identity was a recurring theme interrelated with their classroom participation initiatives. The participants' identities were investigated in terms of their sense of themselves as a learner, including their membership, competence and sense of belonging in different classroom communities. As suggested by the concept of 'community of practice' there is a close connection between identity and practice. Developing a practice requires "the formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus acknowledge each other as participants" (Wenger, 1998, p. 163). Sense of belonging affects and shapes students' participation and sharing of knowledge in the classroom community as it promotes mutual care and helps students better understand their personal development and the connection they have with their environment and changes within it (May, 2011). The case of Mary's experience in Adult Education presented how important her sense of belonging was as she found the classroom atmosphere inclusive and peers supportive and interested in her opinions, which encouraged her to contribute more to the discussions. This finding is consistent with Meeuwisse, Severiens, and Born's (2009, p. 531) empirical study of 523 students from across four Dutch higher education institutions, looking at influences of their sense of belonging. They showed that if students cannot achieve a sense of belonging in terms of feeling they fit in to the academic community with appropriate social and cultural practices and valued knowledge, they tend to withdraw from the programmes. Sense of belong is not just a feeling (May, 2011) but the result of socially significant recognition from the other community members.

Participating in the classroom activities, the students not only discussed the teaching content and acquired the knowledge but also were engaged in a process of negotiating their identities in the new context (Morita, 2004). In addition, disparities between different identities back home and at the UK university created a painful struggle for some participants. Their different identities were

closely related to cognitive, affective and pedagogical factors regarding their knowledge of the subject, background experiences, linguistic competence and the instructors' teaching approaches. It corresponds with the finding of J. Kim's (2012) and Hsieh's (2007) discussions of their participants' identity conflicts in relation to the participants' sense of inferiority, English limitation and anxiety (as presented in the literature review in Chapter Four). Participating in the classroom activities, the students not only discussed the teaching content and acquired knowledge but were also engaged in a process of figuring out their identities in the new context (Morita, 2004). The case of Haijun shows the difficulties he had reconciling his previous image of himself as a top student and his current label of "ignorant" newcomer. His identity conflict was interrelated with language proficiency gaps between his Mandarin and English, competence disparities between a "knowing-everything" student back home and a "dumb" student overseas, and his membership in the classes, all of which played an important part in Haijun's negotiating process of his classroom participation. As Walton, Cohen, Cwir, and Spencer (2012) suggest, the framing of social relationships and sense of belonging are crucial to people's function and involvement in social activities and thus in developing and shaping one's self-identity, values and norms. The process of constructing a new identity is a constant process of negotiating their old and not-yet-formed new identity.

All the categories of factors - linguistic, sociocultural , pedagogical, cognitive and affective factors such as English proficiency, cultural differences, identities, instructors' teaching styles, teaching materials, learning backgrounds, previous academic and professional experiences, motivation, anxiety and personal preference - have an interrelated and connected impact on participants' negotiation of their classroom participation. In the focal international students' view, linguistic, cognitive and affective factors were more influential at the beginning of their time studying abroad, but as time went by, they talked more about the influence of pedagogical and sociocultural factors in their developing and changing participation patterns. This observation supports the argument

informed by the community of practice that the students' participation is a contextually and socially situated issue, as an ongoing negotiation of culture, identities, power, agency and the situated contexts (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The development of a practice takes time and sustained interactions with other members in specific communities.

9.2.2 How do international students' instructors and peers affect their classroom participation?

The second research question seeks to investigate the role of instructors and peers in L2 international students' classroom interactions. Frisby and Martin (2010) claim that a positive rapport between the instructor and the student enhances student participation and fosters an overall sense of connectedness and a constructive classroom environment. Frisby and Martin's study is supported by data analysis of the case of the participant, Khanh. Khanh developed more active and verbal participation patterns in the second semester than the first one as she reflected that she had more interactions with her peers outside the classroom, which boosted her confidence and comfort in speaking up in class. She reported feeling secure in the classroom when she was not afraid of making mistakes, as her peers would help her out if her vocabulary fell short or she got nervous. In contrast, Farah's case set an example of the opposite effect in that she felt isolated by her peers in one of the courses where the majority of student population was Chinese. Farah still spoke up in this class, but she described the classroom environment as "cold and depressing". There was a common lack of interaction among instructors, focal participants and their peers, as reported in the interviews and observations.

Pedagogically, instructors play an important role in the students' classroom behaviours. The most frequently examined concepts related to instructors' influences include teaching approaches, instructor-student rapport, social interactions and the instructor's gender. Dippold (2013) presents the 'gatekeeping

power' of the tutors and the influences of their pedagogical practices. For example, instructors' ways of dealing with students' errors are crucial to students' future classroom participation patterns and the development of instructor-student relationships. However, instructors' influence on students' participation was seen as a contested issue in my research. Yaffa appreciated her instructors' teaching strategy of "cold calling", as she commented that she usually had some ideas in mind but just lacked the courage to speak up. Nevertheless, some instructors were against forced participation. As lecturer Sandie stated, she did not feel comfortable forcing students as she respected all the learners as independent and mature students. Certain teaching practices might work for some students but not others. Nevertheless, the participants usually appreciated a caring and supportive instructor who left space and time for international students to think before the discussion. Tatum, Schwartz, Schimmoeller and Perry (2013) examine the influence of instructors' gender and suggest that there are more voluntary verbal interactions in female instructors' classrooms and that female instructors give more positive feedback to students, which facilitates students' participation. However, this research did not observe obvious differences between male and female staff. For example, similar classroom dynamics were observed in the Inclusive Pedagogy classes taught by Martina and Bob.

All the focal participants expressed their willingness to interact more with domestic students. Some participants treated home student peers as subject experts or people who knew more. They appreciated the benefits of talking to local students and learning from them. However, due to the limited number of domestic students at the postgraduate level and other contextual reasons, most participants had limited interactions with home student peers. Schreiber (2011) and Peacock and Harrison (2009) report similar findings, determining that limited contact between international and domestic students was made both inside and outside the classroom. Furthermore, the fact that home students usually grouped together made international students feel isolated and marginalised in classroom discussions. However, according to my research, there was also a prevailing

tendency among the international students to sit together with peers of the same nationalities. In addition, I observed limited interactions between home and international students but no signs of extreme tensions among domestic and home students when they were working together (Osmond & Roed, 2009), nor did I encounter comments about home students being "cold, uncaring, unfriendly, rude and closed to different cultures", as reported by Russell (2005, p. 71).

The increasingly diverse student populations generated tensions and uncertainties among classroom members due to misunderstandings and different expectations. Conflicts were observed in some classes for different reasons. First, different perceptions of classroom participation led to different performances and behaviours in different classes. As discussed in Chapter Six, instructors and home students tended to value the verbal participation more than the focal students did. In the case of Tracy, who switched to another major, a significant value was attached to verbal participation and contested classroom silence. Tracy did not tell her peers the real reason for changing her major, as she did not want to hurt their feelings. However, some of her peers did feel isolated as international students in the group. Second, different assumptions about the role of instructors affected students' motivation to speak up in class. Some students were used to treating teachers as sources of knowledge and expected instructors to talk and provide a good deal of guidance. Judith Carroll and Ryan (2005) also argued that some international students were greatly influenced by their prior learning experience and had limited knowledge of the classroom conventions of the UK university. Finally, misunderstandings between focal students and their peers affected their relationships and interactions. International students' assumptions about home students' unfavourable attitudes towards them hindered their likelihood to start a conversation. Meanwhile, some domestic students reflected that they were not sure about the level of English that international students were comfortable with or their interaction preferences. A mutual understanding was needed to foster their communication and interactions.

9.2.3 How is silence perceived, used and co-constructed in intercultural classrooms?

Silence is a contested issue in studies of international students' classroom experiences and learning, with some researchers identifying it as problematic and others attempting to justify its legitimacy and merits. The third research question explores how silence is conceptualised, used and co-constructed among all the classroom members involved. Consistent with the existing literature describing silence as problematic or the result of incompetent participation (Kim,2012; Hsieh, 2007; Asmar, 2005), some peers interviewed expressed their perceptions of international students' silence or inactive participation as slowing down the pace of the discussion, "dumbing down" the teaching content and resulting in limited knowledge, experiences and language proficiency. Peers Tracy, Natalie and Claire all showed their concerns about their international student peers' silence regarding one or all of the above consequences, although other peers like Brenda, Kate and Taylor showed their understanding of silence. Similarly, instructors demonstrated different attitudes and reactions to students' silence. Some instructors felt uncomfortable with silence as they felt unsure of students' understanding of the topic or felt that they lacked strategies to get students more verbally engaged. As instructors Achilles and Sarah expressed (respectively), they wanted to look for "a formula" and "observe how other lecturers" get quiet students to speak up. Instructor Christine complained about some students' silence as disengagement as she observed they were playing on their mobile phones. In contrast, other instructors felt at ease with silence when they observed students' attentive listening, taking notes and signs or gestures indicating their engagement.

As indicated by the varied conceptualisations of silence, international students presented different voices, thoughts and feelings regarding voiceless silence. The quiet students were usually invisible to others in the classroom. Nevertheless, the interviews of this group of students indicated that struggles and frustrations, but

also active thinking, hid behind the seemingly peaceful and blank silence (Choi, 2015). The focal participants explained their different reasons for remaining silent in the classroom. Hon negotiated conditional participation throughout his courses. He stated that he would keep silent when he was not interested in the discussion topic, had little knowledge in the subject or when other peers had expressed similar views to his. Hon reflected that he normally felt fine when he remained silent in class except when everyone else was very active in discussions. He reported that only in one course, the majority of whose students were domestic, did he feel pressured to speak quickly to keep up with the discussion flow. Similarly, Morita (2004) reported the reticence of her six Japanese participants and attributed it to various reasons. Besides linguistic and cultural factors, subject knowledge, personal preference, learner identity, position in class and pedagogical practices were all identified as potential causes of the students' silence in class.

However, silence was not always a struggle for the participants. For some, silence gained them time and space to digest the information and to absorb the knowledge. Harumi (2010) highlights the significance of silence as a listening strategy and Ollin (2008) identifies the pedagogical merits of silence as processing information, practising reflexivity and complementing the function of voice. In the case of Qiang, silence was simply his 'way of participation'. While remaining silent in every course throughout his whole programme, Qiang achieved a good understanding of the subjects, which was demonstrated in the positive feedback he received on his assignments. In addition, as Nakane (2006) described, silence was commonly used by Japanese students as a face-saving strategy and to express politeness while trying to avoid confrontational arguments. Participant Qinyi kept silent if she felt tensions during discussions or was unsure about her answers to protect her image of being a competent learner.

Silence has multiple meanings and is co-constructed with the other community members involved. It is important to distinguish different types of silence and thus

react differently to them. As discussed in the theoretical discussion of silence in Chapter Three, this study distinguishes 'proactive silence' from 'reluctant silence' to differentiate silence as an active strategy or an imposed action. As for reluctant silence, it requires instructors' intervention and peers' awareness and support, while proactive silence requires the legitimatization of silence as a participation form or a pedagogical strategy. There is no best practice and silence is not inferior to voice. There is a need for a construction of democratic and dialogic classroom.

9.3 Theoretical Implications

Drawing out the connections between the interpretations and relevant concepts in the literature, this section discusses the examined issue of international students' classroom participation in terms of theoretical constructs from the perspectives of reconceptualising classroom participation, reconstructing cultures in the classroom and discussions of the classroom as a co-constructed and situated community of practice.

9.3.1 Reconceptualising Classroom Participation

Classroom participation could be understood and interpreted in relation to the mix of expectations and appropriateness to the context (Fisher, 2007). I have been trying to define classroom participation since the beginning of this doctoral project and I thought I could explain what classroom participation meant by coming up with a neat definition in the conclusion of my research. However, after examining the large volume of literature and having in-depth conversations with course instructors, participant students and their peers, I realise that an attempt to formulate a "one size fits all" definition of classroom participation would be problematic. I have acknowledged the inherently contextual, fluid, complex and subject-specific nature of classroom participation (Simonis, 2016). I am aware that a universal definition of classroom participation might lead to misunderstanding of different pedagogical practices across different cultures and in different

contexts. However, grounded in what I have learned from the research findings, I suggest a descriptive definition of classroom participation as 'an interactive, fluid and contextual communication practice among students and the instructor in both verbal and nonverbal forms'.

This study unpacks the complex, contextual and fluid nature of classroom participation through a close examination of the focal students' varied classroom experiences and comparing and contrasting different perspectives of different groups. The complexities were shaped by different conceptualisations, different expectations and developing values over time. The focal international students, their peers and instructors expressed diverse perspectives about their understanding of meaningful participation. One obvious difference was the binary view of voice and silence. For some international students, attentive silence (i.e., mental engagement in class) was a mode of participation, while others argued that only verbal input was treated as participation because they thought classroom participation was not simply a personal thing but a community responsibility. Having different conceptualisations and interpretations of classroom participation from their peers and instructors further intensified the complexities of the concept. The case of domestic peer Tracy, who dropped her course due to limited verbal participation from her international student peers, presented her specific value of voice as participation and different perceptions of classroom participation. In addition, instructors' different attitudes and reactions to students' participation patterns presented the contextual and indefinite nature of the concept, with some instructors finding silence uncomfortable while others accepted attentive silence as a participation form. In summary, the research findings suggest that verbal participation is not the only form of engaged learning or active participation, while silence should be considered a legitimate form of classroom participation and a pedagogy that requires further development. Consistent with Ha and Li's (2014) findings from their study of Chinese students' silence, silent but active learning is used as "right, choice, resistance and strategy" and thus is a legitimate form of classroom participation. In addition, criticising

the prevailing negative perception of silence, Ollin (2008) highlights the pedagogical and intrinsic merits of silence in providing time for processing information and practising reflexivity, and he advocates silence as pedagogy to facilitate teaching and learning practices. Silence and voice are not mutually exclusive. Silence is often linked to passive opposition or hostility, but not speaking is rarely regarded as a legitimate choice (Schultz, 2010).Treating silence as a lack of dialogue or participation would undermine its functions, complexity and situated nature (Duff, 2007).

Nevertheless, this research argues the need to distinguish different types of silence. As discussed in Chapter Three, through synthesising Fivush's (2010) notions of 'being silent' and 'being silenced' with Kurzon's (1997) concepts of 'intentional silence' and 'unintentional silence', this study further expands them into new categories of 'proactive silence' and 'reluctant silence' to better reflect students' active choice, agency and power in the negotiating process. As Haijun's case presented, he negotiated both categories of silences in different courses and in the same course at different stages, closely related to factors such as the balance of power, identities and personal values. It was not only an intentional or unintentional linguistic choice but also an active or imposed action.

The fluidity of classroom participation is reflected in L2 international students' changing conceptualisations over time. At the beginning of their studies, all the focal international students perceived classroom participation as verbal participation, such as answering instructors' questions, participating in group discussions and raising questions. This corresponds to the claims in the mainstream literature on classroom participation. However, the research findings revealed that as their studies went on, some participants expressed different understandings of classroom participation; for example, Khanh argued that classroom participation included both verbal and nonverbal participation, but she equated verbal participation with engagement. All 10 focal international students appreciated the significance of classroom participation at the beginning of the

study. However, some of them changed their opinions as their studies went on. Some participants appreciated the benefits of verbal interaction in exchanging ideas, whereas other students criticised some participation as showing off or even being a waste of others' time.

Furthermore, different patterns of understanding and expectations of classroom participation were also observed across different disciplines and different classes. "The negotiation of interactional norms is also performed against the background of the subject area being taught" (Dippold, 2013, p.20). In the classes in the Department of Business, tutors were usually observed explaining calculations and following up with a yes/no question. Participants from the Department of Business paid more attention to the teaching content than to the classroom interaction modes. When asked about their classroom participation, both Qiang and Alisa from the Department of Business talked about how they were mentally engaged in class. In contrast, classes in the departments of Education and Political and Social Policies featured more topical discussions, so the interaction patterns were different and more interactive. Students from these two departments tended to comment on verbal discussions and interactions with peers.

9.3.2 Reconstructing Cultures in the Classroom

Classrooms are often structured around explicit and implicit rules and rituals, including common assumptions about when and how to participate in activities, the role of the instructor and interactions among the peers, which form the culture of the classroom. Different cultural scripts of learning affect students' views and value of their own and others' roles and behaviours (Welikala, 2013). However, this research suggests that culture should be understood as a process of socialisation (Dippold, 2015) rather than a static and fixed concept that summarises a collection of characteristics of a nation or an area. This finding was contrary to some of the literature that applies a cultural framework to interpret participants' behaviours, assuming all students would follow their home cultures'

conventions. As discussed in Section 3.2.1, the homogenous categorisation of culture risks overlooking the uniqueness of individuals and subgroups (Fritz et al., 2008; Montgomery, 2010; Piller, 2017). Confining the scope of culture to units of nations, states or areas encourages stereotypes and labelling (Holliday, 2010). For example, Qiang and Haijun, two participants from Mainland China, shared similar home cultural values but had different expectations of classroom participation and negotiated distinctive participating modes. This evidence shows that culture is not monolithic and even people from the same area might hold different cultural beliefs and expectations. Culture is not static: as it shapes people, people also develop and change culture. Additionally, there is no neat and linear boundary among different cultures. Cultures from different countries are not mutually exclusive; they share more similarities than one might assume. For example, participant Mary from Mexico expressed that although Mexico and China are in different continents, she felt she shared many similar values with her Chinese peers. Mary commented that they were both inclusive and friendly to each other, although their similar status as international students and similar difficulties might also have played a role in their mutual understanding and support.

Classroom cultures operate within and constitute a wider social landscape of the institution, consisting of both the micro-cultural dynamics within the classroom and the macro-culture outside the classroom. Culture is understood in this study as "an active process of meaning making" (Street, 1993: 25) in negotiating between the 'large culture' and 'small culture' (Holliday, 1999), which describes its elusive and fluid nature. International students from diverse 'large cultures' carry different beliefs, values and perceptions with them to the 'small cultures' of the classroom and there is a constant negotiation of rules, rituals and conventions between their backgrounds and the new learning environment. Clark et al. (1991) claim:

> A culture includes the "maps of meaning" which make things intelligible to its members. These "maps of meaning" are not simply carried around in the head: they are objectivated in the patterns of social organisation and

> relationship through which the individual becomes a 'social individual'. Culture is the way the social relations of a group are structured and shaped: but it is also the way those shapes are experienced, understood and interpreted (p.10-11).

Culture in the classroom can thus be conceptualised as the negotiated "maps of meaning" to interpret and guide students' behaviours in the process of socialisation. Classroom cultures shape and are shaped by the involved international students, their peers and instructors.

This study departs from the essentialist view of culture but acknowledges its influences on people's behaviour. Students from different backgrounds reflect different cultural scripts, as they carry their previous learning habits and negotiate them in the new learning environment (Welikala & Watkins, 2008). It is consistent with Piller's (2017) relativist understanding of culture; he calls for researchers to avoid predetermined conceptualisations of culture to achieve a meaningful and socially relevant study of intercultural communication. The strength of having 10 case studies of participants with different cultural backgrounds is that it allows a comparison of the influences of home culture and different understandings of culture. Nevertheless, the comparison was contextual and situated. Students from different disciplines or classroom communities expressed different interpretations of culture. In some cases where international students (mainly Chinese students) made up the majority of the student population, the classroom culture was not simply UK classroom culture. It presented the result of a mix of different cultures. Furthermore, the participants' understanding of culture was also evolving depending on the particular classroom context (Morita, 2004). For example, the familiar power hierarchies of their home cultures did not prescribe complex power relations between students and instructors. The participants negotiated different power relations in various classroom communities and took distinctive roles depending on their familiarity with the teaching content, experiences and knowledge. Exposed to the new classroom rituals and conventions, some students adapted to the new classroom

cultures by imitating their home student peers and made efforts to participate like they did. Some students did not act according to their home cultures or to the new culture. Kramsch (1993) describes this as “the third space” as they do not leave one culture and enter another. They acted in correspondence with their evolving understanding and negotiation between their original culture and the new one.

This study challenges the prevalent cultural stereotype - present in the mainstream literature - of international students, especially East Asians, as silent observers (Cheng, 2000). The cases of Ahmed, Farah, Khanh and Qinyi have demonstrated students’ determination, preparation and efforts of verbal participation. Some students were reticent only in certain classes, whereas silence was a common issue not only observed among international students but also among some home students. We should be cautious and avoid overgeneralisations about students’ participation modes as a category of cultural conduct. Instead, this study argues that culture is a process of socialisation, interactive with individuals and contextual factors.

9.3.3 Classroom as a Co-constructed and Situated Community of Practice

The classroom may be labelled or studied as a community of practice if it meets the defining features, but it was the participants’ identification with the community, their identities and competence to share a common practice with their peers that determined the consistency and success of the legitimate peripheral participation process (Hoadley, 2012). The negotiation of the participation process is inseparable from the context and relationships of the focal students with other classroom community members. Different community dynamics were observed in different academic disciplines and in different subjects of the same disciplines. I observed that in more harmonious classrooms, community members developed respect for diversity, mutual understanding and regular contact. By contrast, in the communities deprived of good communication

and sympathies, tensions and contradictions arose between classroom members. The students did not find a shared domain in the subject; instead, there was a lack of mutual engagement, resulting in no cohesion or integration in the class. It is also worth noting that tension or conflicts were caused by the way the diversity was managed rather than the existing diversity of views or different perceptions of a certain concept. Special efforts would be required in some classroom communities to promote mutual understanding and respect for diversity. Sharing a practice is not enough to form a community of practice and Andriessen (2005) claims that social connectedness among the members, depending on identities and interactions, is crucial to build and support a community of practice. Thus, the classroom is a co-constructed and situated community of practice.

An ideal picture suggested by the social learning theory, community of practice, is that learners acquire knowledge and skills by moving towards full participation with the help of the "old comers" or "experts" (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Duff, 2010). However, not all the participants aimed to achieve full participation in the class, nor did they have a unanimous understanding of full classroom participation due to different learning needs and purposes. As there were varied perceptions of classroom participation, the participants expressed different expectations and understandings of full participation. There is not even a definite conceptualisation of full participation in Lave and Wenger's (1991) framework of 'legitimate peripheral participation'. They distinguish full participation from 'central participation' and 'complete participation' to recognise "the diversity of relations involved in varying forms of community of membership" (p.37). Full participation in class could take different forms, such as silence, speech, note taking and attentive listening. The case of Qiang in the Department of Business showed that silence with attentive listening was his method of full participation, while instructor Eanraig's strong expectation of students' verbal engagement presented his perception of full participation as speech. A prescriptive or universal definition of full participation will not help to build a harmonious community of practice, but awareness and recognition of diverse participation patterns and relations will

contribute to a co-constructed and engaging process.

In addition, such expert help or support as suggested by the framework was usually not available to the international student participants. As observed and reported by a few of the international students, their home student peers and instructors, whom they thought were more knowledgeable and experienced, did not make efforts to support or include them in classroom activities. The old comers or experts might play a debilitating role in international students' integration into the community when they marginalised or devalued their participation. Nevertheless, the important thing is to understand their marginal participation or silence to accommodate the diversity that international students bring to the class. Students' participation in the classroom is not one-way adaptation or adjustment. The existing research tends to look for responsible party to be blamed for the success or failure of classroom participation (Ha & Li, 2014; Hsieh, 2007). This research emphasises the continual, interactive and negotiating nature of classroom participation. Instead of judging anyone's behaviours, I look at the class as the unit of analysis where everyone involved negotiates their membership and position.

The concept of the community of practice broadens our perspective on learning (Haneda, 2006). It is a generative and effective theoretical framework for explaining the interrelationship between learning, identity negotiation and participation in intercultural classrooms of higher education. It provides a referential socio-cultural description of the process of learning as well as a social constructivist theory of learning applicable to group communities. However, these concepts are also criticised for having a few limitations. First, the notion of a community of practice is ambiguously defined. Handley et al. (2006) point out that the meanings attached to this term have been varied and sometimes ambiguous, exploring communities of practice in terms of participation, identity and practice. Likewise, Hughes (2007, p.38) questions Lave and Wenger for their use and understanding of the term 'learning' because in some cases they argue

that learning is “an aspect of all activity”, while in others they propose that learning is “a particular kind of activity”. However, considering varied forms of learning in different contexts for different purposes risks overgeneralising or being prescriptive. As Lave and Wenger (1991) maintain, the value of this model is its “multiple, theoretically generative interconnections with persons, activities, knowing, and the world” (p.121).

Second, there is a dispute about how well communities of practice theory handles power relations. On the one hand, Leki (2001, p. 61) acknowledges that the concept of power is covered in the model of the community of practice and he analyses power from the perspective of participation in a variety of overlapping communities of practice from the perspective of legitimate peripheral participation. On the other hand, Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson and Unwin (2005, p. 66) conclude that “Lave and Wenger acknowledge, but never fully explore, the significance of conflict and unequal power relations as part of their theorising on the internal operation of communities of practice and its relationship with the wider context”. This study finds that there is no explicit discussion of power in the theory, but it is embedded throughout the theorising model, such as in the discussion of ‘legitimate periphery participation’ and identity negotiation. As Lave and Wenger (1991, p.103) argue, “Control and selection, as well as the need for access, are inherent in communities of practice”; this indicates how they value power in communities of practice. However, a more explicit discussion and description in different situations might provide better guidance for future research.

Finally, Haneda (2006) claims that it is beneficial to view learning as participation in social practices but it is necessary to differentiate different types of practices. In order to understand what is learned, it is essential to explain what kinds of practices are involved, such as academic learning or negotiation of peer relationships. Otherwise, it is hard to tell what types of practices, activities or interactions contribute to what kinds of learning. It will contribute to the area if

future research develops a specific link among these three notions. However, this study has presented the complex, fluid and interactive nature of communities of practice and if it categorised the types of practices of particular types of learning, this would restrict its applicability and flexibility as a generative theoretical model.

9.4 Pedagogical Implications

Through the ethnographically-informed case study approach, this study has revealed the interacting and co-constructed nature of classroom communities and thus calls for cooperation among all classroom members rather than judging or blaming any certain member for failing to fulfil their roles. This section identifies the implications for every member involved in intercultural classrooms in order to create a supportive and harmonious community that is beneficial for everyone involved.

9.4.1 Implications for Institutions and Instructors

Institutions' guidelines and policies directly influence instructors' practices, and by playing an intermediary role between institutions and students, instructors' practices affect students' experiences. This section provides implications for both institutions and instructors to foster a more inclusive and efficient classroom atmosphere.

First of all, conceptually, both institutions and instructors should recognise that the internationalisation of higher education is a multidirectional process which requires adaptations from all the members involved rather than assuming that it is international students' responsibility to transfer and adapt. It is the international students who are blamed for unsuccessful classroom interactions when the mutual responsibilities of the interaction are ignored (Dippold, 2013). Turner and Robson (2008) argue that the internationalisation of higher education

should be reciprocal to develop in an internationally integrated environment instead of just accommodating the learning needs of students from other countries into the existing practices. Jenkins (2013) criticises the general tendency of university staff to overemphasise the influence of international students' linguistic limitations and inadequate reflection on their own practice or the potential issues they present for domestic students. As an internationalised university, a broader sense of intercultural awareness should be advocated across the campus. Sawir (2011) claims that staff's interest in other cultures increases their willingness and efforts to adjust their teaching content and accommodate international students' learning needs. General programmes introducing local UK teaching and learning styles and language supports were available in the examined university. However, this research argues that knowledge about the institution's culture is not sufficient for a mutual understanding and inclusive learning atmosphere.

Instead, a stronger sense of intercultural awareness based on cultural diversity should be fostered (Dippold, 2015). Mak, Brown and Wadey (2014) make the similar suggestion that more positive emotions and attitudes could be achieved by improving the opportunities and quality of intercultural interactions. As discussed in Chapter Three, there has been a development of intercultural pedagogies to raise intercultural awareness and celebrate cultural diversity, such as the development of 'pedagogy of the other' (Burney, 2012), 'transcultural approach' (Janette Ryan, 2011) and 'flexible pedagogies' (A. Ryan & Tilbury, 2013). However, despite general recognition of the importance of intercultural awareness, cosmopolitan competence or transformational attributes, which are often used interchangeably when discussing global competence, it is difficult to achieve due to limitations in terms of social connectedness, intense assignments and a shortage of time (Moskal & Schweisfurth, 2018; Turner, 2013; Turner & Robson, 2008b). A potential approach to manage the interaction challenges is through 'reflective practice', as proposed by Dippold (2013), among all members of the classroom community. Reflective practice calls for more time and opportunity to reflect on one's own practices, to think from others' perspectives and to negotiate

the interaction norms in a co-constructed meaning-making process.

Second, institutions should make efforts to recruit a more diverse student cohort and limit class sizes. With respect to the global trend of the corporatisation of higher education, student recruitment is more profit- and market-driven (McCarthy, Song, & Jayasuriya, 2017). China is the largest contributor of international students to postgraduate programmes (HESA, 2018). The dominance of Chinese students in all the three departments studied brought about teaching and learning issues from all perspectives. Complaints were heard from instructors, Chinese international students and their domestic and other international peers. As lecturer Martina from the Department of Education commented, the dominance of one single nationality was not healthy for anyone involved and it decreased students' opportunities for intercultural experiences and challenged instructors to meet different learning needs. The university that I researched at has started to adopt various marketing strategies to recruit students from different countries as well as home students. I am aware that it takes time to change, but at least the institution could control the number of students recruited and the class sizes. The extremely large size of the classes, such as one lecture in the Department of Business, which had almost 300 students, affects students' concentration, interaction and comprehension of the teaching content. In addition, the institution could have provided more social and pastoral support that is responsive to students' diverse needs, such as opportunities to meet local families and to participate in home stay arrangements and events (Turner and Robson, 2008). Qinyi and Qiang were both allocated to a flat shared by all Chinese students even though they had indicated that their preference was to share with different nationalities. Immersion in the language, culture and local environment is seminal (Schweisfurth & Gu, 2009) and a significant part of students' learning experience.

Third, there is a need to further construct and develop the internationalised dimension of the curriculum in response to the new learning context. An agreed way in the literature is through incorporating international and intercultural

dimensions into the learning outcomes, teaching content, practical processes and support programmes (Leask, 2009; Sanderson, 2011; Turner & Robson, 2008a). The inclusion of international perspectives in the course content would increase international students' interest in contributing to the classroom discussions. Beelen and Jones (2015) call for more focus on "internationalising existing, discipline specific learning outcomes within the home curriculum for all students, on appropriate pedagogy and associated assessment" (p.64). Internationalised curriculum should also encompass the informal part to guide the supportive services and activities (Beelen & Jones, 2015). Beyond the campus studies, intercultural and international learning opportunities are significant for students' development and experiences. However, there was no informal curriculum available in the three departments researched to guide the arrangement of supportive activities. The social and supportive activities observed were random and dependent on the instructors' personal understandings. There is a need for the development of both formal and informal internationalised curricula to accommodate diversity, foster integration and raise students' awareness of themselves as global citizens.

Fourth, institutions should provide training and resource support for staff. Daniels (2013) reports on university staff members complaining of insufficient support from the institution in developing their skills and strategies for supporting international students. When I interviewed instructors on their perceptions of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse classes, they reported feeling that they lacked strategies and skills to accommodate both domestic and international students' learning needs, although none blamed insufficient support from the institution. As lecturer Achilles from the Department of Business commented, he would like to know a "formula" to get international students to speak up; lecturer Sarah said she would like to see how other instructors address the various needs of different groups of students. Hyland, Trahar, Anderson and Dickens (2008) claim that staff's lack of international experience and associated knowledge challenges them to internationalise their teaching content and to accommodate students'

diverse needs. Instructors in Hyland et al.'s study also comment negatively on the institution's staff development training. The majority of staff in the current study had strong intercultural awareness and recognised international students' participation and learning difficulties, but they felt challenged when it came to making adjustments or including more internationalised teaching content when they were unsure of the knowledge.

Finally, pedagogical practices have great influence on classroom interactions. Ryan and Tilbury's (2013) framework of flexible pedagogies provides a comprehensive guidance with six new ideas in different dimensions: 'learner empowerment', 'future-facing education', 'decolonising education', 'transformative capabilities', 'crossing boundaries', and 'social learning'. There is a prevailing agreement on the benefits of inclusive approaches, flexible methods and varied tasks to accommodate different participation patterns and learning needs (Heron, 2019; A. Lee, 2017; Turner & Robson, 2008a). Cruickshan, Chen and Warren (2012) argue for three key characteristics of an inclusive pedagogy for international students: power equality in class, playing the role of 'experts' by both domestic and international students, and language and learning support embedded into assessments.

In addition, regarding the issue of silence, while some teachers feel uneasy with it and treat it as a gap to fill (Ollin, 2008), silence as pedagogy requires skills and conscious strategies of instructors based on an understanding of the learning environment. It requires instructors' awareness of different types of silence. As for proactive silence, instructors should leave time and space for students to process the information and respect their active choice. In contrast, reluctantly silent students usually have strong desire to speak up but experience difficulties joining in the activities. In such cases, intervention should be considered based on an understanding of the causes, e.g., to leave students some thinking time to organise language and ideas or to invite quiet students' opinions when some students are dominating the discussion. It is

difficult to tell whether students' silence is a proactive choice or a reluctant situation but being aware of different types of silence would help instructors to be attentive and responsive to students' learning needs and feelings. Empathy and patience can be applied as pedagogical tools to provide time and space for development and changes in the classrooms. As Cook-Sather et al., (2015) advise:

> "In order to find empathy and understanding within oneself at the same time as one engages in the deep, critical analysis expected with higher education, we need to develop an awareness of our own assumptions and have patience-the ability to see that with time people, both students and faculty, may change or grow in unexpected ways" (p.34)

Empathy and patience can empower the learners and promote the development of instructors' awareness of different forms of classroom participation and students' diverse needs.

9.4.2 Implications for Native English-Speaking Peers

The accounts of the perspectives of native English-speaking peer students on learning in linguistically and culturally diverse groups revealed very different opinions. In one class, some peer students complained about the presence of international students. They were concerned that the international students cause the teaching content to be "dumbed down". This group of students were unwilling to join in the same group with international students for group discussions or group projects. This finding corresponded with Knight's (2011) finding that international students often feel marginalised inside and outside the classroom and their domestic peers are known to be reluctant or at best neutral to join with international students for group projects or interact with foreign students outside the classroom. Teekens (cited in Beelen & Jones, 2015, p.65) points out that the main issue of the development of internationalisation at home is: "What do we do with the vast majority of students who are not exposed to intercultural learning and an international experience?" Among this group of students, there was generally a lack of intercultural awareness and they usually blamed international

students for insufficient preparation and unsuitable language skills.

However, another group of peers treated international students as a learning resource and enjoyed communicating with them. This is consistent with Schweisfurth and Gu's (2009) findings that some students reported that interacting with international students facilitated the emergence of their cosmopolitan identity as a world citizen. As Ryan (2011) proposes, there is a need to reposition international students as 'assets' to internationalising and developing new knowledge and new ways of learning. Peers who appreciated international students' presence were usually more patient with international students' struggles with language and left them space and time to organise their ideas. Some peers in this group also mentioned that the speaking pace of the instructors was slower than they expected at a master's level, but they reflected that the reading list was challenging enough for them to have more in-depth learning of the teaching content. Kate, a domestic student, commented that she liked playing the role of teacher sometimes when her international student peers did not understand some English words or facts, because she felt the "teaching" process consolidated her knowledge.

There is controversy in the literature as to whether to encourage interactions between domestic and international students. Students in Harrison and Peacock's (2009) study criticised the "forced events". In contrast, participants in Dunne' s (2009) spoke highly of the arranged activities as they appreciated the acquaintance and support achieved at the events. Schweisfurth and Gu (2009) show that inequality, financial challenges and different goals between international students and their UK peers limit their contact and the development of interculturality. Being aware of the limits of the scope and extent of contact in campus life, this study argues that contact between home students and international students should be encouraged. As Schweisfurth and Gu (2009) propose, the higher education environment is full of possibilities with its diversity and interculturality. There are opportunities for students to cooperate across

different cultures, and for mutual support for personal and academic adjustments and development. Within the environment of globalisation, it is a useful skill to be able to build effective communication across different cultures with different people. A supportive network of international peers may be beneficial in the long term. Colvin, Volet and Fozdar (2014) state that only when the home students have a dynamic view of culture and "perceive the cultural other as permeable" are they likely to have deep and meaningful interactions with international students.

9.4.3 Implications for L2 International Students

Although it should not be solely international students' responsibility to adapt to their new learning environment, coming to study in a foreign country requires considerable preparation and efforts on the part of international students. This subsection summarises some of the strategies and resources that the participants reported useful.

First, students should make the best use of induction activities. Although some students complained that their induction was not all useful, they had a common feeling that the induction meeting provided a sense of community and marked the beginning of their studies. Turner and Robson (2008) suggest that induction programmes could be crucial to addressing potential mismatches of learning objectives and expectations between students and institutions. However, induction programmes without careful consideration or design could also generate 'otherness', indicating deficiency of the international students. As observed in all the three departments, induction activities were available to students to introduce them to the structure of the course, assessment criteria and key administrative and academic staff members. Matheson and Sutcliffe (2017) call for the need for an induction programme to establish an expectation of student engagement and to promote trust and belonging by valuing and respecting students' opinions, cultures and individual backgrounds. It will be helpful for

students to get a picture of the course objectives and what is expected from them. In addition, getting to know their peers in induction activities is also a good way to start the course. The experiences of the focal international students showed that some of them met their study buddies there, and it is ideal to have company and support from the beginning of the term. Some participants also reported that familiarity with their peers could facilitate their classroom participation.

Second, previewing the teaching content and finishing the assigned readings are important for exchanging ideas in class. I observed that normally domestic students would finish the readings before class. However, some international students confessed that they sometimes did not read the article when they had assignment deadlines or when they felt frustrated by the large number of new words in the reading material. However, I suggest they must read to glean the main ideas and take notes about anything they fail to understand. Otherwise, it is difficult to join in the discussions in class, even as active listeners. Some students commented that they got annoyed when their peers had not done the reading because it made it difficult to discuss the topic.

Third, international students should get familiar with the services and support available to them. At the university where I did my fieldwork, there was an international student support centre providing both social and academic support. Over the course of this research, I have directed the students to various services that they were unaware of, and some reported that they benefited from the support received. For example, the university provided private librarian appointments to help students look for references and make use of library resources.

Finally, although this study does not assume that verbal participation is the best participation practice, it is beneficial to develop communicative skills. The students should make some effort to be more open-minded and develop their verbal participation strategies. One of the graduate attributes listed by the UK

university where I conducted this research is that they are "Effective Communicators"; they are described as being able to communicate complex ideas in accessible ways with respect to the different needs and abilities of diverse audiences and to effectively listen and negotiate with others. Dippold (2015) argues that one of the aims of the internationalisation of higher education is to turn students into "global graduates" who have mastered academic and professional skills for the global world, and communicative ability is one such skill.

9.4.4 Implications for Teaching and Learning Practices that Encourage Verbal Participation

This study argues the significance of recognising different classroom participation modes, both verbal and nonverbal engagement in various classroom activities. The awareness of different participation patterns is crucial to achieve mutual understanding and thus to the development of a democratic and inclusive classroom atmosphere. However, there are types of class activities, such as pair and group discussions, that specifically call for students' verbal participation, irrespective of whether they are international or domestic students, and silence in those contexts can result in tension or the non-fulfilment of the intended teaching purposes. In those cases, all class members' efforts and cooperation are required to achieve active interactions and a dynamic classroom atmosphere. This section pulls out from my data recommendations for instructors, peers and international students as a community on ways of encouraging verbal participation.

First, corresponding to the advocacy of the development of the internationalised dimension of the curriculum as discussed above, the inclusion of topics from different countries should be promoted in class activities to arouse students' interest and motivation to contribute (Jude Carroll, 2014). An examination of the teaching materials among the three departments showed that there was a lack of international or intercultural dimensions to the teaching content, with the British context dominating. As Qinyi from the Department of Education commented on

the teaching content of one of her compulsory courses, Educational Thoughts, there was no Chinese educational thought despite the fact that the majority of students were from China, and she expressed her interest in sharing Confucian philosophy with her peers. Mary commented that she felt it was her responsibility to introduce educational issues in Mexico when the teaching content was related to her country and that she would also make extra efforts to contribute to the discussion in that case. In the Department of Sociology and Social Policy, Hon observed that her quiet peers from mainland China spoke up more actively when the discussion topic was related to China, which in turn aroused their domestic peers' interest in further discussions.

Second, the strategic management and arrangement of group activities has been observed to effectively facilitate and promote more active verbal participation. Robinson (2006) presents that the arrangement of classroom activities and group projects could help facilitate students' interactions and foster community-building. Effective strategies observed and reported by the class members were: 1) paired and outcome-based small group activities; 2) tactical table arrangements that remove physical constraints; 3) thinking time before discussion; 4) diverse group makeups; 5) speaking slowly and explaining complex concepts; 6) encouraging and positive feedback on students' contributions. There was a common tendency observed in the classrooms for students of the same nationality to sit together and communicate in their first language. The instructors reacted in different ways to this situation. Some instructors let students sit wherever they wanted and form their own groups; as instructor Sandie argued, as long as they could understand the teaching content, she thought it was fine for them to group together. However, participants Mary and Qinyi complained about the dominance of native English-speaking peers and expected Sandie to intervene. Occasional and purposeful interventions to mix students can boost interaction and mutual understanding among students as well as increasing intercultural communication opportunities. The research data have shown that more efforts are required to achieve a balance of instructors' control and students' freedom. For example, the

instructor of Adult Education set a good example by arranging different class activities and group arrangements from week to week so that in some weeks, students had the freedom to choose their own group while in other weeks, they were arranged to make them sit with peers of different backgrounds.

Third, creating a community of learners is crucial to encourage mutual engagement and support in class activities. The underlying theoretical notion of community of practice is that learning is a process of transformation of participation in which all class members contribute support and direction in shared endeavours (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Based on the total integration experiences of Ahmed, Mary and Khanh in specific classes, this study finds that the following characteristics of class communities facilitate an inclusive classroom atmosphere and active verbal participation. 1) Caring and empathetic instructors and peers. The cases of Ahmed and Mary demonstrate how instructors' and peers' warmth and care made a difference in promoting their verbal engagement in activities. They appreciated their instructors' and peers' efforts to remember their names and to grade their language, which made them feel comfortable and comfortable speaking up. 2) Regular group meetings outside the classroom. It was observed that some courses required regular interactions and social activities outside the classroom to work on group projects, which contributed to establishing rapport and mutual understanding with peers. Khanh's total integration in Education Enquiry showed that her sense of belonging in the class community developed out of more frequent interactions with peers. 3) Highly valued and expected input from students. It is important to achieve a common understanding of the teaching and learning practices in the new learning environment. This study recommends an open discussion in induction activities or the first class of individual courses on students' understanding of classroom participation to promote the appreciation of the mutual benefits of verbal participation and engagement. A common characteristic of the three courses in which participants achieved total integration was the students' feelings of being highly valued and understanding of expected input. In addition, Yaffa reflected that 'cold calling'

from instructors and invitations from peers made her feel that her opinions were valued and encouraged her to talk more in class activities.

Finally, apart from the mutual endeavours by all class members as discussed above, the following strategies were reported by the focal international students to be effective in facilitating their verbal participation in class activities: 1) initiating a question to direct others to topics with which they were familiar; 2) trying not to think about language errors; 3) preparing for the discussion questions if they were available before class; 4) achieving a state of readiness through preparatory reading and previewing; 5) being honest with peers about their participation difficulties and asking for help; 6) making private appointments with instructors to talk about their difficulties. This is not an exhaustive list of strategies, but it includes some key examples that worked effectively for the participants. Depending on the situation, students can develop other strategies that work for them.

9.5 Limitations of the Study

To be transparent and critical regarding my research and conduct, this section reflects on and addresses the potential limitations of this study. First, the qualitative nature of the current study determines its limitation in terms of generalisability. This study cannot provide generalisable solutions to international students' classroom participation issues. Indeed, a common concern about case studies in their limitation when it comes to making scientific generalisations (Yin, 2009). However, this study does not seek generalisable, unified and 'right' answers, but rather aims to provide a better understanding of international students' classroom participation. In addition, Yin (2017) argues that case studies are generalisable to theoretical propositions, though not to populations or universities. This study aims to present insights into theories but not statistical frequencies.

The second limitation I would like to reflect on is a methodological one. The

proposed research approach, ethnographically-informed enquiry, requires considerable immersion in the research context. However, I only managed to observe the participants' classes for one semester (rather than the whole academic year) due to time limitations and administration issues. Observing students' classroom participation for another semester could have helped me identify their changes more directly. Another limitation resulted from the sampling strategies. Because my recruitment of the participants called for volunteers via social media and within the classroom, the participants who volunteered to participate in this study may have been more active and willing to communicate. They cannot represent the whole student population.

Finally, my research skills presented another potential limitation to this study. Bryman (2012) claims that interviewing demands certain skills and experiences of the researcher, such as communicative competence, language skills and question wording. Similar to classroom observation, it requires the researcher's sensitivity to the context, dynamics and changes in the participants' behaviours. This study was my first experience of doing an independent large-scale project over an extended period of time, although I have used classroom observation and interviews in my master's research. Despite my potential skill limitations, I have received systematic training from my faculty and achieved rich data from the instruments applied, and I developed skills in the process.

9.6 Personal and Professional Development

> "Qualitative data collection can serve as an intervention in itself for participants as well as the researcher. Be prepared to be changed by the research process as you uncover realities specific for participants and settings; your attitudes and behaviours related to a particular phenomenon may shift as you learn from your participants. Also, your motivation to speak for those with limited or no voice in research will likely be strengthened… The social nature of qualitative inquiry generates new knowledge and affective understanding of phenomena: You start to think, feel, and respond in different ways as you become immersed in qualitative inquiry" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 222).

Corresponding to Hays and Singh's (2012) comment, this qualitative exploratory study has changed me personally and professionally. It has enabled me to obtain a better understanding of international students' classroom experiences overseas. On a personal level, as it was explained in the introduction, this study was motivated by my exchange study experience in Australia. It helped explain my confusion about my different behaviours in different classes. Moving away from the essentialist view of the predetermined influence of language and culture, I was able to recognise and acknowledge the significant role of the context and members involved in the classroom community.

Although I never aimed to intervene in the international students' classroom participation patterns or lead them in a direction, my involvement had unavoidable effects on their study or thoughts. I have received positive feedback from participants regarding this study's influence on them. Some of them treated me as a friend and a listener to talk to about their study concerns and difficulties. One participant said she treated the interviews and our casual chats as a reflection process. By talking to me, she began to understand herself and others better. I am pleased that this research could offer some support to the participants in their studies overseas, which I have been through myself.

During the journey of this study, I have developed professionally, acquiring the knowledge and skills to carry out a research project independently. It is not a smooth process and I have experienced periods of confusion and self-doubt. However, all the experiences and lessons I have learned throughout the course have enabled me to find my academic voice and to enhance my confidence to embark on further projects. It has also developed my research spirit and beliefs. Instead of looking for 'a correct answer', I am more aware of the power of critical thinking to explore a certain issue within its context, taking account of different perspectives and acknowledging diversity.

This study has also come up with some potential implications for institutions,

educators and students regarding improvements in practice. The influence on my teaching practice has been constant and will continue. During this PhD study, I worked as a seminar tutor to organise and facilitate students' discussions. With my participants' voices and reflections in mind, I began to acknowledge students' thinking and language organising time and became more at ease with students' silence. I made efforts to promote mutual understanding among the students and share my research findings with them occasionally to encourage and acknowledge their participation. I am aware that this may not achieve an immediate change, but if it raises the involved members' awareness and appreciation of diversity and fosters mutual understanding, it is a good beginning.

9.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this case study of the 10 focal international students in combination with comments from their instructors and peers has much to teach us about the negotiation process of classroom participation at a UK university. The international student participants' negotiation of various influencing factors, their voices behind the silence and the role of their instructors and peers reveal how complex the process is and how much depends on the contextual atmosphere of the classroom community. The research has provided a cautionary note for those who would interpret international students' classroom participation as an individual responsibility to acquire relevant skills and knowledge. Through investigating the actual classroom experiences of the focal students and the perspectives of their instructors and peers, it has shown classroom participation as an interactive and situated process that requires mutual understanding, appreciation of diversity and cooperation. Verbal engagement is not the only form of classroom participation; silence also has its role to play. Rather than silencing voices, this study calls for 'a middle way' to identify the interconnections between different participation patterns - the voice and silence - to reclaim voices for the reluctantly silent, to silence oppressive voices, to legitimise proactive silence, and to appreciate constructive voices. There is a call for the development of a democratic classroom

where there are spaces and opportunities for both voice and silence.

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Appendix One Synthesis Matrix of Literature Review

Sources	Research Approach	Findings	Research Subjects	Research Context	Theoretical Framework
Asmar, (2005)	Interviews Questionnaire survey	Perceptions and experiences of international and Muslim students in intercultural communities • More academically integrated than socially • Stereotyping of non-traditional students and their cultures persisted • Rather than treating difference as a deficit, universities could do more to internationalise all students for a globally connected and culturally diverse world	174 International and local Muslim students	13 Australian universities	
Dippold, (2013)	3 semi-structured and retrospective interviews based on 3 video-recorded classes	Students and instructors should be given time and space to co-construct the international norms	3 seminar tutors	A UK university	Classroom interactional competence
Fotovatian, (2012)	Case study Audio-recorded lunch-time conversations (once	Explore the way to construct, develop, and negotiate their new academic 'institutional identities' through second language	4 international non-English speaking background Ph.D.	Australian universities	Sociocultural theories of second language in use Second language socialization

	a week for 4 months) Participants' narratives and two focus group interviews (once conducted after the recorded conversations and once two years later)	socialization Comes up with three constructs of identity A self-conservative approach A self-engaging approach A self-isolating approach	students from Nepal, Indonesia, and China		
Frisby & Martin, (2010)	Questionnaire	• Influences of relationship between instructors and students Classroom connectedness enhance classroom participation	233 undergraduate students	A mid-sized Mid-Atlantic university	
Gu, Schweisfurth, & Day, (2010)	Mixed method research • A questionnaire survey • Case studies • Individual interviews • One focus group meeting • A second questionnaire survey Duration two years	• Investigation of the transitional experiences of international students • Comparisons within and across different student groups in transition, aiming to identify similarities and differences between students from different cultural and academic backgrounds • Personal, pedagogical and psychological factors are as important as organizational and social cultures in influencing	233 first-year international undergraduates 10 students from different countries and studying different disciplines 126 undergraduate students	Undergraduate level at four UK universities	Internationalisation (Knight, 1999, 2004)

		students' adaptation, identity change and ultimate success.			
Habu, (2000)	Informal interviews	• Tensions between expectation and status in the UK • Being devalued for academic input but merely a source of revenue	25 Japanese students	A UK university	
Hsieh, (2007)	Case study	• The silence of a Chinese international student • Invisible and ignored • Deficient self-perception • American peers' cultural homogeneity disempowered the participant	1 Chinese student	A US university	
Ha & Li, (2014)	Case study	• Silence as choice, right and resistance • The diversity and fluidity of the nature of silence • Contextual influences in silence	4 Chinese students	Both Australian and Chinese university classrooms	
Kim, (2012)	Interviews	Sense of inferiority Identity conflicts Language barrier	50 Korean graduate students	A US university	
Leki, (2001)	Ethnographic case study Interviews with participants and	Academic relationships that L2 learners form with domestic students • L2 students were positioned as novices,	6 ESL participants from Taiwan, Finland, China, Japan, and Poland	Course-sponsored group projects at a large state university in the US	Group work Legitimate peripheral participation (Lave, & Wenger, 1991)

	their professors Classroom observation	• Differences in power and linguistic limitations prevented participants from benefiting fully from and contributing meaningfully to their group project work • Suggestions made for instructors of better planned group work	5 undergraduates 1 graduate		
Marginson, (2014)	Semi-structured interviews	• International education as self-formation • The drawbacks of adjustment paradigm • Deprived agency freedom and identity hybridity	290 international students	Australian and New Zealand universities	
Marginson et al., (2010)	Interviews	• Lack of social engagement with local students • Experiences of discriminations and abuses • Security of international students	200 international students from 35 countries	An Australian university	
Maundeni, (2001)	Semi-structured interviews	• Network as supportive and stressful • Discrimination, domination and incompetent English proficiency • Group of co-nationals	29 African students	UK universities	Social network theory
Morita, (2004)	Qualitative multiple case study Self-report Interviews Classroom	• Academic discourse socialisation experience of L2 learners • How a group of female graduate students from Japan negotiated	6 female graduate students from Japan	A Canadian university	Language socialization Activity theory and Neo-Vygotskyan research Critical discourse research

	observations Duration: one academic year	their membership within their new Canadian academic communities	10 course instructors		Community of Practice
Moskal & Schweisfurth, (2018)	Interviews	• cosmopolitan competency can be related to ability to connect with the people from other cultures, appreciation of diverse cultures and view of one' s own culture in a new context • limitations to social connectedness and open-ness often linked to the power imbalances in internationalised higher education, and the attendant limitations on their voice and agency	88 international students	At UK universities and in their home countries up return	Cosmopolitanism (Vertovec, 2009)
Norton, (2001)	• Interviews • Diary study • Participant observation Duration: a year	• The relationship between non-participation and the 'imagined communities', investment, and language learning • Investigate the relationship between identity and language learning, focusing on language learning practices in the home, workplace and school	5 ESL learners from Vietnam, Poland, Peru, and Czechoslovakia	ESL courses in Canada	Communities of Practice
Parris-Kidd & Barnett, (2011).	Phenomenological study: • Non-participant classroom observations	• Influence of 'cultures-of-learning factors' in classroom participation • Chinese students' classroom participation at the intersection	3 pre-university Chinese students	University pre-sessional English course, Australia	Culture of learning (Cortazzi, & Jin, 1996)

	• Semi-structured individual interviews Duration: 10 weeks	of cultures of learning in terms of choices made by the learner, the teacher and the institution • Negotiating a new culture of learning			
Shi, (2010)	Ethnographic study Duration: 5 months	Factors' affecting individual's socialisation into an intercultural classroom • cross-cultural transfer, • interactive routine in the context • home culture • host cultural communicative norms	1 Chinese postgraduate MBA student	A US university	Intercultural language socialisation
Tatum et al., (2013)	Observation study/	• The influence of students' and instructors' gender on classroom participation Faculty-student interactions	158 students 5 male professors 9 female professors	A US college	
Tatar, (2005)	Qualitative case study: • Retrospective accounts • Classroom observations	• Silence as a face-saving strategy and protection • Silence as a means of participation • Silence as a reaction to others' contributions • Silence as a sign of respect for authority and concern for others • Silence as the product of a feeling of inarticulacy	Turkish ESL graduate students 2 doctoral students 2 master students	School of education at a state university in the US.	

Tran & Pham, (2015)	150 interviews Duration: four years	• Various dimensions in which intercultural engagement is seen to encompass empathy, sociability and equity but also employability • Meaningful interaction is essentially bound to reciprocal learning	150 participants including international students, teachers and course managers from 25 institutes	Australian universities	Blumer's symbolic interactionism theory
Valdez, (2015)	Interviews	• Identity conflicts • Perceptions of 'white stereotypes' from Chinese students' perspective • Preferred American teaching style • Lack of contribution to group projects	15 Chinese students	A US university	Double consciousness
Vickers, (2007)	Ethnographic study: 4 times of observations of team interactions 3 playback sessions to look at participants' views of interaction Duration: one year	• Examine how the non-native speaker becomes socialised to participate in interactional processes that allow him to construct an expert identity. • L2 socialisation is part of a larger process of socialisation in human development, dependent on the novice participants' access to opportunities for interaction with socialized members of the community	6 engineering students in the final year of undergraduate study 5 English native speakers 1 non-native	A US university	Second language socialization Community of Practice
Wadsworth, Hecht & Jung,	Quantitative Survey via	Effects of international students' acculturation, perceived	218 international students in	At US universities	Communication Theory of Identity

(2008)	questionnaires	discrimination, and identity gaps formed in their interactions with Americans on the level of satisfaction they experience in American college classrooms	96 undergraduates 111 graduates 11 unknowns		Personal identity Enacted identity Relational identity Society's ascription of an identity
Weaver & Qi, (2005)	Quantitative Survey: questionnaires	Factors influencing students' class participation • Formal and informal class structures • Authority of faculty • Faculty-student interaction • Fear of peer disapproval • Para-participation • Students' attributes Preparation	1,550 undergraduate and graduate students 87% white, 7.5% African American 4.5% other ethnic groups	A US university	Social organization: the college classroom as a social organization where power is asserted, tasks are assigned and negotiated, and work is accomplished through the interplay of formal and informal social structures.
Welikala, (2012)	Interviews Narrative/ story telling	• How learners from diverse cultures and academics make sense of their learning and teaching experience • Students' learning is mediated and shaped by their own cultural scripts for learning. • Teachers identify increasing challenges in terms of identifying different pedagogical needs of the learners and understanding different approaches to teach which the different students bring to British pedagogies.	30 international students for postgraduate degree 15 teachers	UK universities	Social Constructivist

Welikala & Watkin, (2008)	Interviews	• International students are critical of their instructors' and local peers' reactions to them, "stupid arguments" (p.26) and "Intransigence" • Different cultural understanding of the roles of tutors	40 international postgraduate students	A UK higher education institution	Cultural scripts Analysis through constructivist grounded theory
Wu & Hammond, (2011)	Interviews	The adjustment of East Asian Master's level students who came to study in intercultural classrooms	8 Master's level students from 5 different East Asian countries	A UK university	Sociocultural perspective
Yeh, (2014)	3 semi-structured interviews 10 participatory observations in ESL classroom 3 observations of the social activities Duration: 6-month	ESL adult speakers' sense of their participatory legitimacy within American ESL discourse settings, including ESL classrooms and authentic real-life situations	6 ESL students of varied ethnicities and linguistic backgrounds	A US university	Bourdieu's theory of recognition and misrecognition

Appendix Two Classroom Observation Schedule

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9am		Classroom processes Room 256 Students: Yaffa & Ahmend Instructors: Annie &Sarah		29/09-13/10 27/10 09:00 to 15:30 Inclusive Education Room 717 Students: Qinyi & Mary Instructor: Martina	Finance Tutorial Room:101 Student: Alisa Instructor: Eanraig	
10am			21/09-30/11 10-12pm International Finance Room: 109 Student: Qiang Instructor: Hansen			15/10/2016 10:00 - 14:00 Room 157 Students: Qinyi and Yaffa Instructors: Grace & Razi
11am			21/09- 30/11/2016 International Politics Room 600 Students: Farah, Hong &Dong Instructors: Christine & George			
12pm						
1pm	Accounting Tutorial 04: Room 218 Students: Qiang and Alisa Instructor: Khalid	20/09—29/11 Weekly Room 201 International Accounting Students: Qiang & Alisa Instructor: Achilles	19-26/10 16-23/11 Finance Tutorial Room 9:222 Student: Qiang Instructor: Eanraig			
2pm					Method social research Room 312 Students: Farah, Hong &Dong Instructor: Steven	29/10/2016 14:30 to 18:30 Educational Studies Laboratory Room 203 Students: Khanh Instructors: Mike
3pm					Tutorial Room 652 Students: Farah, Hong &Dong Instructor: Stephanie	
4pm						
5pm	Educational Studies Lecture Room213 Students: Mary, Khanh, Qinyi, Ahmed, Yaffa			17:00 to 19:00 Educational Issues Room 718 Students: Qinyi & Mary Instructor: Sandie		
6pm	Educational Studies Seminar Room 345: Students: Qinyi and Yaffa Instructor: Grace and Razi					

Appendix Three Classroom Observation Form

Date: 13/10/16

Instructor:	Martina	Course:	Inclusive Pedagogy
Participant ID	Mary, Qinyi		

Class dynamics	1) Characteristic of student population in the class 23 students in total, majority Chinese, 2 Greek, 1 Scottish, 1 Estonia, 1 German, 1 Mexico 2) Delivery pattern(s) ☒Lecture ☒Whole-class discussion ☒Group discussions ☐Student presentation 3) What is the balance? Any difference in the class dynamics in different teaching modes? * Mainstream lecture embedded with whole-class discussion and group discussions. * More actively speaking in group discussions. 4) Seating ☒Students of the same nationality *One group of all Chinese students ☒A mix of different nationalities *Mary and Qinyi sat in a mixed group of Chinese and Scottish students. They sat in the first row of the classroom. *2 Greek and 1 German in the same group with another Chinese *1 Estonian student with four Chinese students

Focal Students	1) How did the student participate in class activities? In what kind of activities do they speak up, volunteer or invited by others? ☒Lecture Volunteer/Invited *Mary asked about the meaning of an education term *Qinyi was quiet, taking notes and listening attentively ☒Whole-class discussion Volunteer/Invited *Mary shared her understanding of the concept "self-esteem" ☒Group discussion Volunteer/Invited *Mary and Qinyi in the same group, both talked about opinions on the reading material. ☐Student presentation Volunteer/Invited 2) What responses do they get from instructors or peers? ☒Compliment * Mary, compliment from instructor about her understanding of the concept ☐Neutral ☐Disagreement 3) Non-verbal behaviours while non-participating in different teaching methods in class ☒Lecture *Both Mary and Qinyi took notes and nodded occasionally. ☐Whole-class discussion ☒Group discussion *Qinyi looked at her notes when she talked and looked up words in her mobile dictionary ☐Student presentation 4) Interactions with instructors and peers in class and during the breaks *Mary and Qinyi had a chat about their assignments *European students and a Scottish went to buy Coffee together

Instructor	1) Support/scaffolding to international students ☒Language support ☒Content support ☒Encouragement * Explained concepts and terms that are specially used in Scotland at the beginning of the lecture * Called for Chinese students to explain the situation in China * "Yeah! This is an interesting one", "Excellent", "Good" 2) Supervision and summary of the oral activities *Went to different groups during group discussion, listened and took notes *Summarised the discussion with the whole class 3) Behaviours in different teaching methods in class ☒Lecture *Frequent use of examples and stories ☒Whole-class discussion * Quiet students were invited to give their opinions ☒Group discussion *Move around the classroom ☐Student presentation 4) After-class communications with students *Some students came to her to ask questions about assignments *Offered to walk together with a group of students who were on the same way

Peers	1) Their role in different classroom activities * European and Scottish students spoke more often than Chinese students did * The Scottish student in Mary and Qinyi's group facilitated the group discussion. She explained some cases and terms in Scotland. 2) Any support they provide for the focal students ☒Inviting their participation *The Scottish student in Mary and Qinyi's group often asked about her group members' opinions ☒Language or content support *Yes, the Scottish student explained a few terms to her group ☐Ignoring their silence *Was not observed 3) Their participation in different classroom activities, volunteer or invited by others? ☒Lecture <u>Volunteer</u>/Invited *1 Greek student asked a few questions and he talked slowly and calmly *Chinese students did not ask any questions during the lecture ☒Whole-class discussion <u>Volunteer</u>/Invited *Scottish and European students talk more often than Chinese students do, especially in whole-class discussions. ☒Group discussion <u>Volunteer</u>/Invited ☐Student presentation Volunteer/Invited 4) Interactions with instructors and peers in class and during the breaks *The three European students grouped together both in discussions and during the breaks *The group with all Chinese students discussed questions in Mandarin

Appendix Four Interview Schedule with International Students

Interview one (at the beginning of the academic year)

1. Background information

1) Age:
2) Gender: Female/Male
3) Nationality:
4) Are you coming to study directly after your bachelor's degree?
5) What is your major for your bachelor's degree?
6) What is your major for your master's degree?
7) Is there a gap between your bachelor's degree and your Master's? How long in between?
8) Have you had a full-time job before?
   What kind of work did you do? Was it relevant to your major? Have long have your worked?
9) Have you ever been to an English-speaking country before you came here?
   How long have you been in English-speaking country and for what purpose, study working or traveling?
10) How often do you use English to communicate in your home country?
    What role does English play in your life and in your country? Are you confident about communicating in English?

2. Program of study

1) What is the title of your program?

3. Expectations of postgraduate studies overseas

1) Why did you choose to study at the University of Glasgow?
2) Do you have any plans or expectations of your postgraduate study abroad?
3) What are your expectations of the courses you are enrolled in?

4. Initial impressions and adaptations in class

1) What are your initial impressions of your program, courses, instructors and classmates?
2) What do you think of the induction programme and fresher's week?
3) In your home country, are you someone who likes to participate in class? Would you consider yourself as someone who naturally wants to talk in class?
4) Compared with your previous experience, have you found any difference or similarity?
5) Do you perform differently in different classes? If so, what do you think contribute to the difference?

   Do you feel you have anything in common with your classmates? How do you feel about your classmates? Do you feel you are related in a way?
6) Do you communicate with instructors or classmates outside the classroom? How does the interaction influence your participation in class?
7) What concerns do you have about your academic competence in general?

5. Enculturation and personality

1) How do you feel in a foreign country?
2) Where do you go in your free time and how do you spend your leisure time?
3) What are your friendships group are? Do you make friends with people from your own country and whether you mix?

Interview Schedule with International Students

Interview two (at the end of the first semester)

1. General impressions of Semester 1 studies

1) What is your general impression of the first term studies? How is it different from or similar to your previous learning experience?
2) What was your imagination of the classes here before you came? Is there any disappointment or surprise?
3) Are there any difficulties you experienced in this new learning environment? How did you deal with them? If you could go back in time, what would you do differently?
4) Which is your favourite course among all the courses you got enrolled in Semester 1? Could you please describe the course and why do you like it?
5) What have you learnt from this semester? Have you met your expectations?

2. Classroom participation in Term 1

1) What does classroom participation mean to you? How do you participate?
2) Which course did you participate the most? Is it the same course as your favourite one?
3) What impressions do you have about your participation in Course X (ask about the classes observed)? Any difficulties you have experienced and how did you deal with them?
4) What helps you or holds you back from taking part in oral activities, such as open-ended class discussion, group discussion and paired discussion?
5) Do you participate differently in different classes? If so, why?
6) How do you feel about the importance of your participation? Do you feel you have to participate? Do you think it has any influence on others in your class?
7) Have your participation patterns changed over time? If yes, how did they change and why?

3. Identity negotiation in Term 1

1) What impressions do you want to leave on others in class? What compliments would you like to hear from your instructors or peers? Do you think you have achieved that?
2) Do you have any assumptions about what other classmates or instructors think of you? Are they true? How do the assumptions influence your participation?
3) Do you feel you have integrated with your classmates or you feel isolated from others?
4) Do you think your willingness to participate is related to the extent of engagement? What factors influence your participation and engagement in class?
5) How would you feel when you gave a wrong answer in class or when you could not express yourself clearly? Any different feelings in different classes?
6) What's something in the past that shapes you the person you are today?

4. Interactions with course instructors and classmates

1) How do you interact with course instructors and classmates inside and outside classroom? Do you have any social activities together? Do they influence your participation?
2) Do you have any comments on your course instructors? Do you think their teaching approaches make any difference in your classroom participation?
3) Can you understand the instructors and the tasks you are asked to do?
4) Do you have any comments on your peers? How do you get on with them? Any support or challenge from them?
5) Have you noticed any differences between yours and your classmates' participation? How does it affect your performance in class?
6) Who gave you the most support for your studies or life here?
7) Who do you interact with the most? How do you spend your leisure time?

5. Improvement and concerns on academic/English abilities

1) What concerns do you have about your academic competence in general? How do they influence your classroom participation and your confidence?

2) Have you got any feedback of your assignment? How do you feel about it?
3) How does English proficiency influence your participation and what are the effects of the classroom participation on your English use? How do you feel about your English ability improvement?

6. Plan for semester 2 and suggestions

1) Do you have any goals to achieve in semester 2? Anything you want to do differently?
2) Do you have any concerns or suggestions about this research?

Interview Schedule with International Students

Interview three (at the end of the whole programme)

1. General impressions of semester 2

1) What are your general impressions of your studies in the second semester? Are there any differences from Term 1?
2) Have you met your expectations of this semester?
3) What did you enjoy about this semester?
4) Have you come across any challenges? If so, how did you solve them?

2. Classroom participation

1) What do you think of your class participation in the second semester? Have you identified any difference from the first semester?
2) Does your participation pattern differ in different courses? If so, what do you think contribute to the difference?
3) How do you feel when you talk in class, such as small group discussion and whole class discussion? Compared to term 1, are there any changes in your feeling?
4) How do you feel after you speak in group discussion or whole-class discussion?
5) Do you ask questions spontaneously in class when you are unclear of the teaching content or discussion?
6) Have you made special efforts or applied any strategy to talk in class?
7) Has your attitude towards classroom participation changed over time?

3. Identity negotiation

1) How do you feel about your study ability in general? Has this feeling changed over time?
2) How do you feel about the grades of your assignments? Have the grades influenced you in any way?
3) Do you think you have equal opportunities to take part in the oral class activities as other classmates?

4) How do you feel about your relationship to your classmates, any differences in different classes?
5) Is there any group that you feel you don't belong to or you feel you cannot join?

4. Impressions of course instructors and classmates

1) Have you observed any common teaching pattern(s) here? Do you like it/them?
2) Have you got any support for your oral participation in class?
3) How do you find your experience in interacting with your peers inside and outside classroom?
4) How could they do better in supporting you in your studies and classroom oral participation?
5) What are the differences between yours and your classmates' participation? How does it affect your performance in class?

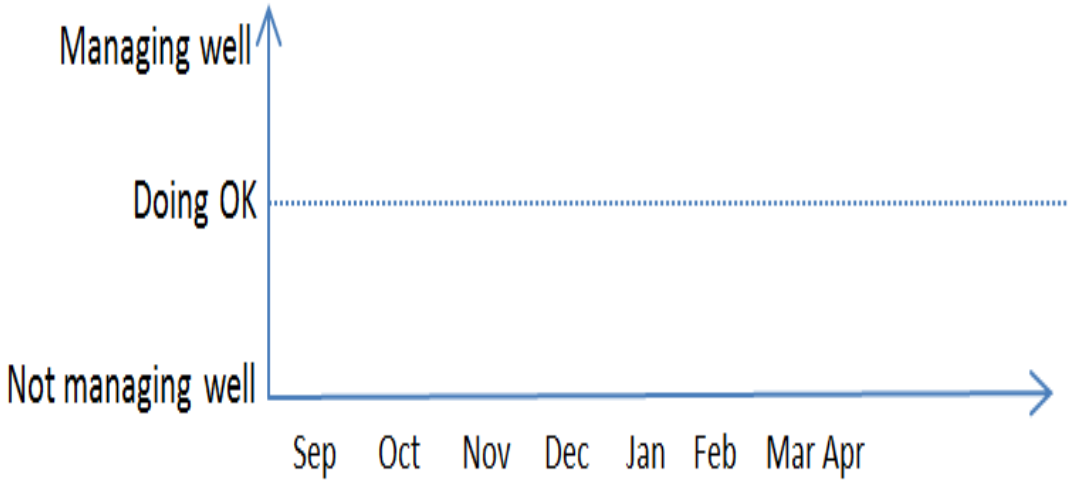
5. English proficiency

1) Do you think your English proficiency has any influence on your oral participation in class?
2) Do you think your English ability has improved through this one-year study? If so, do you think participation in the oral activities contributes to the improvement?
3) Have you made extra efforts to practise English and what opportunities and support did you get in improving and using English?
4) Do you feel different while you speak English or your native language?

6. General impressions of the whole programme

1) What is your general impression of your master's programme?
2) Have you observed any educational culture differences between your country and here?
3) How do you describe your classroom experience through this academic year?
4) Have your ideas about learning changed since you came here? What are the main sources of learning for you?

5) Are there any ups and downs during your studies? If so, could you please draw in the following diagram about any turning points and the general trend?



Managing the Ups and Downs of Living and Studying (MUDLS) (Gu, Schweisfurth, & Day, 2010)

7. Suggestions for future NNES international students, instructors and higher education institutions

1) Based on your one academic year experience, what suggestions do you have for future international students, instructors and universities?
2) What support do you think will be helpful for international students and what supports did you enjoy?

Appendix Five Interview Schedule with Instructors

(At the end of first semester)

1. Characteristics of the course and student group

1) How did you plan and organise the lessons and classroom activities? Why?
2) What were the interaction patterns in the class (e.g. lecture-oriented, seminar or students-led)? Why did you deliver the class in this style?
3) How would you characterise the group of students in this class? Compared to other classes you have taught, were there any similarities or differences? Why?

2. Sympathy with NNES international students

1) Do you have any experience of working or studying abroad at a university? Do you have any experience in working/studying in different language than your mother tongue?
2) What difficulties do you think international students face in this new learning environment?
3) Did you treat NNES students the same or differently to national students? Why?
4) Did you do anything special to help the NNES international students? What/Why?
5) Have you ever received any emails or other ways of seeking your help from NNES international students? What were their problems? How did you respond?

3. Expectations and evaluations of students' classroom participation

1) What expectations do you have for students' participation in this class?
2) Are there any rules of classroom participation you promoted or have informed students to comply with?
3) Do you think is there some relationship between their learning and participation? Do you think it's necessary to participate in class activities to achieve a better result of learning?

4) What do you think of the students who are always or relatively silent in class?
5) What does participation in class mean to you? What signs do you look for that someone is participating?
6) Is classroom participation evaluated or graded?

4. Impressions of NNES international students' classroom participation

1) What are your impressions of NNES international students' participation in this class?
2) How do you find NNES international students' interactions with you and their peers?
3) What are your impressions of a certain student (focal students and some other students to ensure focal students' confidentiality)? Do you have any comments on his or her classroom participation?
4) As for group discussions, how do you divide students into different groups?
5) Do you interact with students during the breaks or outside the classroom? If so, how did that happen and what do you think of its influence in students' class participation?

5. Pedagogical adjustments

1) What have you learnt about teaching international students? How/Where did you learn this? What would you like to find out? Why?
2) How do you feel about the presence of international students in this class? Any influence on your teaching?
3) What input, if any, have international students brought in the class?
4) Have you seen any difficulties that international students had in mastering the content of this course? Any teaching adjustments you have made accordingly?
5) Have you ever experienced any challenges with classroom interactions in this class? If any, how did you solve them?
6) Is there anything you would like to do differently in the future teaching?

Appendix Six Interviews Schedule with Peers

(At the end of first semester)

1. Impressions of NNES international students in class

1) Do you have any working or studying experience abroad in your second or foreign language?
2) Do you feel you have anything in common with your classmates? Any differences?
3) How do you choose where to sit in the classroom? Any preference as to whom to sit with?
4) Do you have any understanding problems with your NNES classmates? If so, what do you think causes the problem?
5) How do you feel about the presence of international students in this class? Any influence in your learning?

2. Interactions with NNES international students

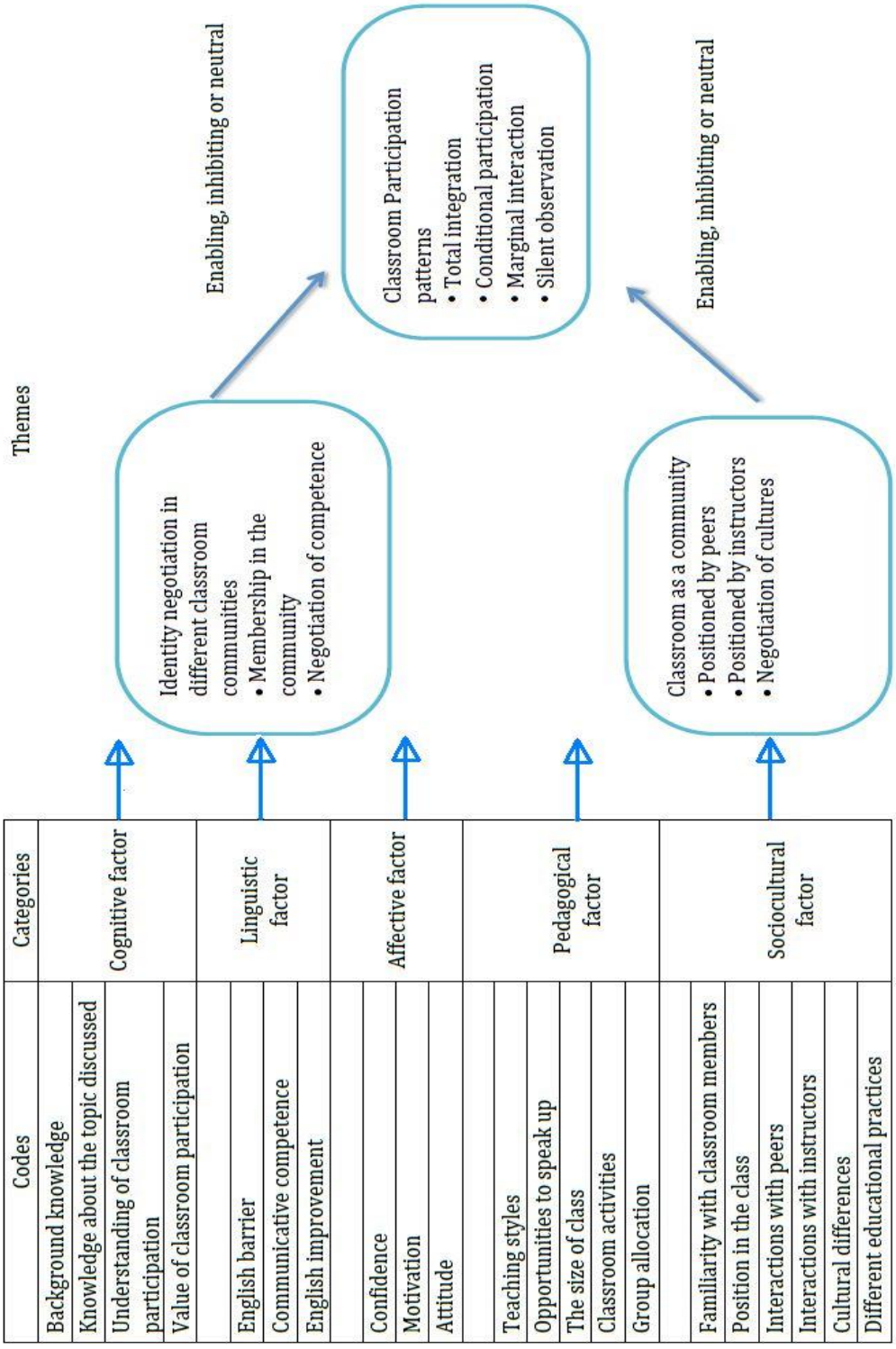
1) What are your impressions of NNES international students' participation in oral activities?
2) How do you feel about your participation in the class? How did their class participation influence yours, if any?
3) Have you seen any challenges they have been through in classroom participation? If so, did you try to support them?
4) Have you done any group work with NNES students? How did you feel about it?
5) What do you think of the students who are quiet in class activities?

3. Experiences in different courses

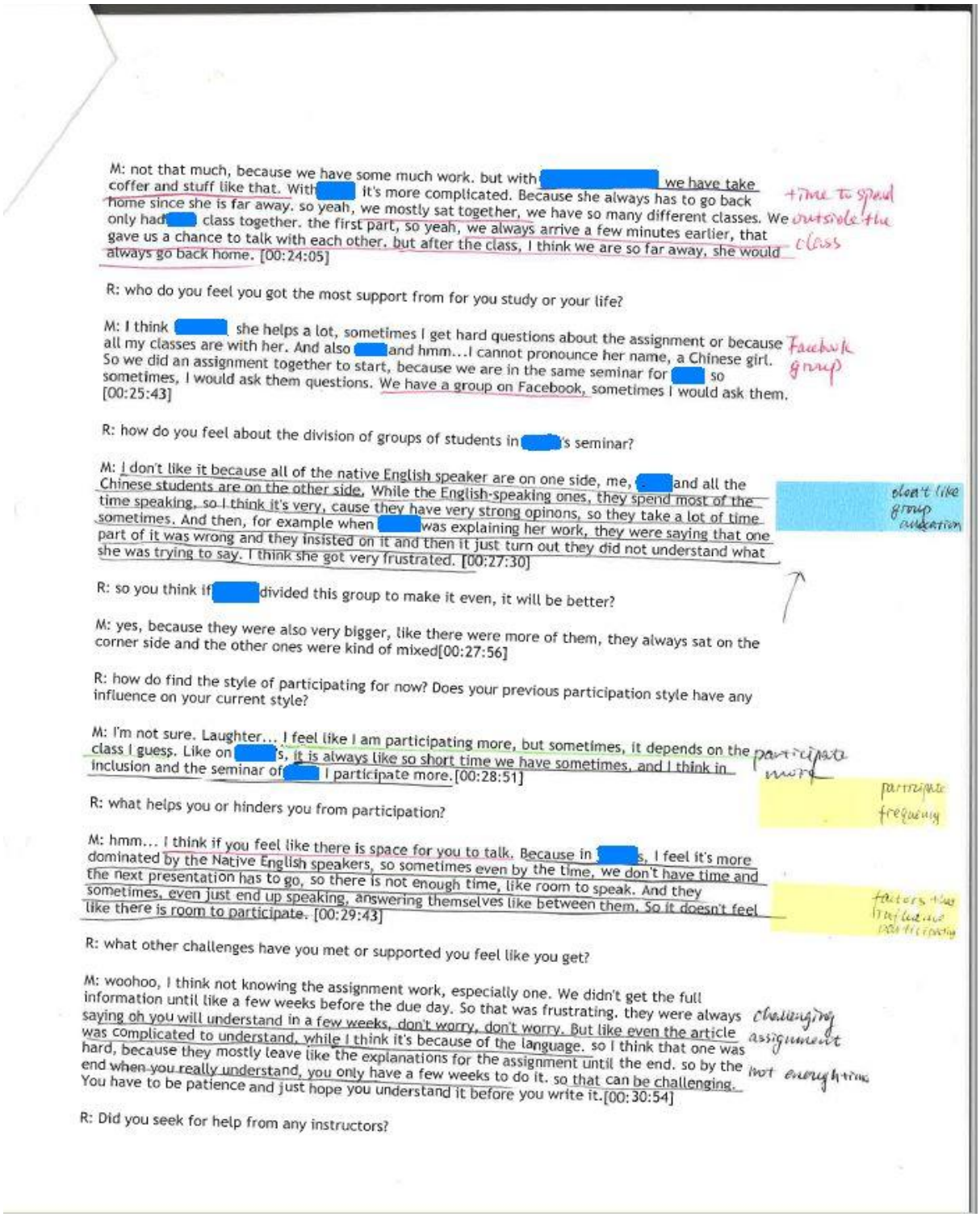
1) Do you interact differently with your classmates in different courses? If so, what do you think contribute to the differences?
2) Do you think it is necessary to participate in class activities? Any different understanding in different courses?

3) What input, if any, did international students bring in the class?
4) Did you have any interactions with NNES international student outside the classroom? If so, how did it influence your interaction with them inside the classroom? If not, would you like to interact with them outside the classroom?
5) Have you experienced any disagreement with others in class discussions? If so, how did you try to get your ideas through?

Appendix Seven Coding Framework



Appendix Eight Coding Example



M: not that much, because we have some much work. but with [redacted] we have take coffer and stuff like that. With [redacted] it's more complicated. Because she always has to go back home since she is far away. so yeah, we mostly sat together, we have so many different classes. We only had [redacted] class together. the first part, so yeah, we always arrive a few minutes earlier, that gave us a chance to talk with each other. but after the class, I think we are so far away, she would always go back home. [00:24:05]

time to spend outside the class

R: who do you feel you got the most support from for you study or your life?

M: I think [redacted] she helps a lot, sometimes I get hard questions about the assignment or because all my classes are with her. And also [redacted] and hmm...I cannot pronounce her name, a Chinese girl. So we did an assignment together to start, because we are in the same seminar for [redacted] so sometimes, I would ask them questions. We have a group on Facebook, sometimes I would ask them. [00:25:43]

Facebook group

R: how do you feel about the division of groups of students in [redacted]'s seminar?

M: I don't like it because all of the native English speaker are on one side, me, [redacted] and all the Chinese students are on the other side. While the English-speaking ones, they spend most of the time speaking, so I think it's very, cause they have very strong opinons, so they take a lot of time sometimes. And then, for example when [redacted] was explaining her work, they were saying that one part of it was wrong and they insisted on it and then it just turn out they did not understand what she was trying to say. I think she got very frustrated. [00:27:30]

don't like group allocation

R: so you think if [redacted] divided this group to make it even, it will be better?

M: yes, because they were also very bigger, like there were more of them, they always sat on the corner side and the other ones were kind of mixed[00:27:56]

R: how do find the style of participating for now? Does your previous participation style have any influence on your current style?

M: I'm not sure. Laughter... I feel like I am participating more, but sometimes, it depends on the class I guess. Like on [redacted]s, it is always like so short time we have sometimes, and I think in inclusion and the seminar of [redacted] I participate more.[00:28:51]

participate more

participate frequency

R: what helps you or hinders you from participation?

M: hmm... I think if you feel like there is space for you to talk. Because in [redacted]s, I feel it's more dominated by the Native English speakers, so sometimes even by the time, we don't have time and the next presentation has to go, so there is not enough time, like room to speak. And they sometimes, even just end up speaking, answering themselves like between them. So it doesn't feel like there is room to participate. [00:29:43]

factors that influence participation

R: what other challenges have you met or supported you feel like you get?

M: woohoo, I think not knowing the assignment work, especially one. We didn't get the full information until like a few weeks before the due day. So that was frustrating. they were always saying oh you will understand in a few weeks, don't worry, don't worry. But like even the article was complicated to understand, while I think it's because of the language. so I think that one was hard, because they mostly leave like the explanations for the assignment until the end. so by the end when you really understand, you only have a few weeks to do it. so that can be challenging. You have to be patience and just hope you understand it before you write it.[00:30:54]

challenging assignment

not enough time

R: Did you seek for help from any instructors?

Appendix Nine Plain Language Statements

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Plain Language Statement

(For international students)

Study Title: International Students' Participation in Intercultural Classrooms at a UK University

Researcher Details: Sihui Wang is a PhD candidate studying in the School of Education from the University of Glasgow. This research study is part of the requirements of her doctoral degree. For further information, please contact her or her supervisors by following E-mail addresses,

Researcher: Sihui Wang E-mail: **Supervisors**: Dr Marta Moskal E-mail: Marta.Moskal@glasgow.ac.uk Professor Michele Schweisfurth E-mail: Michele.Schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Feel free to ask if there is anything unclear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the study?

This research aims to explore how postgraduate taught international students see themselves as a learner and how they participate in oral activities, such as group work and open-ended class discussions in the classrooms at a UK university. At the

same time, the researcher would also like to study the influence of different teaching approaches and interactions with classmates. The research aims to make suggestions to higher education institutions on how to facilitate international students' classroom participation.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to be part of this research because you are an international student from outside the UK and your experiences of classroom participation is relevant to the current study and can make a difference to future students' studies overseas. This study is also beneficial to you in achieving a reflection of your studies and making adjustments accordingly.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation in this research is purely voluntary. You reserve the right to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

This study includes classroom observation and face-to-face interviews. You will be observed in your classrooms and the researcher will note down your participation and interactions with peers and instructors in oral activities. Please don't feel stressed, as the researcher will not only observe you but the whole class. You will also be interviewed about your opinions on classroom participation experiences. The interview will be audio recorded.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Confidentiality and anonymity will be assured. A pseudonym will be allocated to you and any identifiable information about you will be removed so that you cannot be identified.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research study will form part of the doctoral dissertation. However, research participants' identities will not be disclosed. The research data is proposed to be kept until October 2028 because there are possible intentions to use the data for academic publications and conference presentations. During the proposed period of data retention, all personal data will be destroyed and deleted, while the unidentifiable data of audio record and field notes will be stored in Glasgow University Repository. In addition, the e-copy of the data will be stored in the researcher's personal laptop encrypted and accessed by password only. In October 2028, all original data will be destroyed and shredded, while all electronic files will be deleted.

Contact for Further Information

This project has been considered and approved by the College Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact

Dr Muir Houston

The College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer

E-mail: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Plain Language Statement

(For peers)

Study Title: Negotiation of Participation in Intercultural Classrooms: Perspective of International Students at a UK University

Researcher Details: Sihui Wang is a PhD candidate studying in the School of Education from the University of Glasgow. This research study is part of the requirements of her doctoral degree. For further information, please contact her or her supervisors by following E-mail addresses,

Researcher: Sihui Wang E-mail: **Supervisors**: Dr Marta Moskal E-mail: Marta.Moskal@glasgow.ac.uk Professor Michele Schweisfurth E-mail: Michele.Schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Feel free to ask if there is anything unclear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the study?

This research aims to explore how postgraduate taught international students see themselves as a learner and how they participate in oral activities, such as group work and open-ended class discussions in classrooms at a UK university. At the same time, the researcher will also study the influences of different teaching

approaches and interactions with classmates. This research aims to make suggestions to higher education institutions on how to better facilitate international students' classroom participation.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to be part of the current research because you are international students' classmate and the researcher is exploring the effects of interactions with peers on international students' classroom participation. Your participation in the current research will help with making suggestions to facilitate international students' studies while enhancing your learning experience.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation in this research is purely voluntary. You reserve the right to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

The fieldwork includes classroom observation and face-to-face interviews. Your class will be observed, and the researcher will note down your participation and interactions with international students in oral activities. Please don't feel nervous as the researcher will not only observe you but the whole class. You will also be interviewed about your opinions on interactions with international students at the end of the semester. The interview will be audio recorded.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Confidentiality and anonymity will be assured. A pseudonym will be allocated to you and any identifiable information about you will be removed so that you cannot be identified.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research study will form part of the doctoral dissertation as a fulfilment of a degree. However, research participants' identities will not be disclosed. The research data is proposed to be kept until October 2028 because there are possible intentions to use the data in future academic publications and conferences presentations. During the proposed period of data retention, all personal data will be destroyed and deleted, while the unidentifiable data of audio record and field notes will be stored in Glasgow University Repository. In addition, the e-copy of the data will be stored in the researcher's personal laptop encrypted and accessed by password only. In October 2028, all original data will be destroyed and shredded, while all electronic files will be deleted.

Contact for Further Information

This project has been considered and approved by the College Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact

Dr Muir Houston

The College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer

E-mail: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Plain Language Statement

(For instructors)

Study Title: Negotiation of Participation in Intercultural Classrooms: Perspective of International Students at a UK University

Researcher Details: Sihui Wang is a PhD candidate studying in the School of Education from the University of Glasgow. This research study is part of the requirements of her doctoral degree. For further information, please contact her or her supervisors via the following e-mail addresses:

Researcher: Sihui Wang E-mail: **Supervisors**: Dr Marta Moskal E-mail: Marta.Moskal@glasgow.ac.uk Professor Michele Schweisfurth E-mail: Michele.Schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information and discuss it with others if you wish. Feel free to ask if there is anything unclear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to participate.

What is the purpose of the study?

This research aims to explore how postgraduate taught international students see themselves as a learner and how they participate in oral activities, such as group work and open-ended class discussions in classrooms at a UK University. At the same time, the researcher will also observe the influences of interactions with peers and instructors. This research aims to understand the difficulties that

international students may face and make suggestions to facilitate their classroom participation.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to be part of the current research because there are international students in your class. As an ethnographically-informed research, this study will trace focal students to different classes and observe their classroom participation. Meanwhile, your opinions about the examined issue will enrich the research data. Your participation in the research is appreciated and will contribute to potential suggestions on supporting international students.

Do I have to take part in?

No. Participation in this research is purely voluntary. You reserve the right to withdraw at any time without a given reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

The fieldwork includes classroom observation and face-to-face interviews. Your class will be observed for the whole semester to study the participation of international students in oral activities. The researcher will be silent in class and take notes on the learners' behaviours. No audio or video records will be involved. At the end of the semester, you will also be interviewed about your opinions on international students' classroom participation. The interview will be audio recorded.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Confidentiality and anonymity will be assured. A pseudonym will be allocated to you and any identifiable information about you will be removed so that you cannot be identified.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research study will form part of the doctoral dissertation. However, research participants' identities will not be disclosed. The research data is proposed to be kept until October 2028 because there are possible intentions to use the data in future academic publications and conference presentations. During the proposed period of data retention, all personal data will be destroyed and deleted, while the unidentifiable data of audio record and field notes will be stored in Glasgow University Repository. In addition, the e-copy of the data will be stored in the researcher's personal laptop encrypted and accessed by password only. In October 2028, all original data will be destroyed and shredded, while all electronic files will be deleted.

Contact for Further Information

This project has been considered and approved by the College Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact

Dr Muir Houston

The College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer

E-mail: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix Ten Consent Form

College of Social Sciences

Consent Form

Title of Project: International Students' Participation in Intercultural Classrooms at a UK University
Name of Researcher: Sihui Wang
Names of Supervisors: Dr Marta Moskal and Professor Michele Schweisfurth

I confirm that I have read and understood the Plain Language Statement for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I consent to audio-recorded interviews and use of my direct quotes in the research analysis and findings. (I acknowledge that copies of transcripts will be returned to participants for verification.)

I consent to be observed in the classroom. (I acknowledge that copies of field notes will be returned to participants for verification.)

I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonyms and participants will not be identified in any publications arising from the research.

I understand that data collected for this research will be stored securely with my personal details removed and I agree that the data will be held as stated in the Plain Language Statement.

I agree that data collected in this research will be shared with other researchers as set out in the Plain Language Statement.

I agree to waive my copyright to any data collected as part of this project.

Please tick as appropriate:

I agree to take part in this research study ☐

I do not agree to take part in this research study ☐

Name of Participant …… Signature ……..

Date ……

Name of Researcher …… Signature……..

Date……